



THE BIRCHWOOD VOICE

Birchwood Lakes Community Association, Inc.
212 Aspen Road, Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328
(570) 828-2111 • www.birchwoodlakes.net

Volume 5/ No. 4

BIRCHWOOD LAKES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

WINTER 2011

President's Message

by Marcella Livingston

A big thanks to the Beautification Committee for the beautiful holiday decorations at the 739 entrance and clubhouse. Our entrance display really put us in the holiday spirit. In driving throughout the community I also saw many beautifully decorated homes that brightened our community during the season.

Winter has arrived and with it the snow. Please drive carefully and don't obstruct areas to be plowed. Remember, ATVs and snowmobiles are not allowed on our roads.

We welcome our new maintenance employee, Peter Newman. Peter started in Birchwood on January 3 and has had to jump right in with snow removal.

We also welcome our new board member, Linda White. Linda replaces Charles Ritson, who resigned in October after extending his term. Linda brings to the board many fresh, new ideas

to enhance community involvement. She has joined many committees including the Community Affairs and Recreation Committees.

The Capital Projects Committee is moving forward on the restructuring of the maintenance yard beginning with the salt shed, the evaluation of our pool structure and preliminary costs on remodeling the office. If you have any interest in these projects please consider joining the committee. The Community Safety and Property Development Committees are also looking for new members. A Committee Request form can be downloaded from our website Forms page at www.birchwoodlakes.net, or you may contact the office for more information.

By the time you read this, the 2011/2012 budget will already have been voted on. I'd like to thank all members of the committee who worked so hard to keep ex-



East Lake in the winter.

penses down and find ways to increase our income. We are vigorously working on collections and are following through on judgments against owners who fail to pay their dues and assessments. The full election results are found on the Birchwood Lakes website.

Our children's Easter party and egg hunt will be held on Saturday April 16. Save the date! Watch for fliers and check our website!

IMPORTANT NOTICE ON VOTING

In the past, the Judges of Elections have not counted a few votes because the signature on the mailing envelope did not match the Signature Verification Card that was on file.

We understand that due to age and developing health issues your signature may have changed over time. If you have noticed a difference in your signature since you originally submitted your Signature Verification Card, please notify the BLCA office in writing to request a new Signature Verification Card. Upon request, it will be mailed to you.

Additionally, if you are unsure if you have a Signature Verification Card on file, please contact the office to verify. Your vote is important!

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Deadline for the Birchwood Lakes newsletter is May 1.

2011 Board of Directors

Officers

President: Marcella Livingston
 Vice President: Joanne McInerney
 Treasurer: Carolyn Martin
 Secretary: Clare Bennett

Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs

Standing Committees:

BLCA Property Development:	Chairperson:	Carl Fredrickson
	Co-Chair:	Charles Ritson
Roads Maintenance & Construction:	Chairperson:	Louis Freeman
	Co-Chair:	Denis Murphy
Rules & Regulations:	Chairperson:	Carolyn Martin
	Co-Chair:	John Meola
Finance, Budget, Contracts:	Chairperson:	Carolyn Martin
	Co-Chair:	Marcella Livingston
By-Laws:	Chairperson:	Clare Bennett
	Co-Chair:	Joanne McInerney
Capital Projects:	Chairperson:	Charles Ritson
	Co-Chair:	John Meola
Voting & Elections:	Chairperson:	Clare Bennett
	Co-Chair:	Carolyn Martin

Appointed Committees:

BLCA Property Beautification:	Chairperson:	Carl Fredrickson
	Co-Chair:	JoAnn Woods
Community Safety:	Chairperson:	Thomas McConnon
	Co-Chair:	
Community Affairs:	Chairperson:	Sheila Salmon
	Co-Chair:	Clare Bennett
Recreation:	Chairperson:	Joanne McInerney
	Co-Chair:	
Lake Management:	Chairperson:	Charles Ritson
	Co-Chair:	Thomas McConnon

P.U.P. (Pick up Poop) Patrol

by Roy Kohan

Yes, it does role down hill! Poop that is. It's bad enough that the geese and the droppings of all God's other critters flow downhill and into our waters, but we as responsible pet owners can help the situation. It's unsightly and unhealthy that people leave their pet droppings behind on the roadways that we walk and ride on. It does flow downhill and into our lakes. Remember, what our animals leave behind we will eventually have in our lakes and wells.

PENNVEST Individual On-Lot Sewage System Repair Program

Assistance is available to eligible homeowners that do not have access to a public sewage system and need to repair or replace their individual on-lot system. The assistance is in the form of loans at an interest rate of one percent with a maximum loan term of twenty years.

If you are interested in this program and would like further information, contact a PENNVEST Participating Lender (Colonial American Bank, David W. Eglin 215.657.4343) or the Delaware Township Sewage Enforcement Officer.

WINTER ROADS

With winter here, Birchwood Lakes would like to offer the following tips and information for your safety and convenience:

Don't drive unnecessarily in a storm, especially during severe snowstorms and freezing rain.

Remember to keep the roads and right of way clear of vehicles and other encumbrances. Our maintenance employees cannot plow roads that are blocked by cars. Vehicles blocking BLCA roads will be towed. Any landscaping items within the BLCA right of way may unintentionally be damaged by plowing efforts. BLCA will not be responsible for damage to items within the right-of-way. Please familiarize yourself with the locations of parking areas within BLCA should you need to pull over while obtaining assistance.

Be sure your car is properly equipped for winter driving with snow or all-season tires and properly functioning windshield wiper blades.

Remind your children to play away from the roads for their own safety.

There is no practical way for maintenance to avoid dropping snow in your driveway when they are plowing. You can minimize this frustrating event by trying to avoid cleaning out your driveway until the road has been plowed or by clearing an area to the right of your driveway where snow from the plow will drop before being deposited in the driveway. When plowing or shoveling your driveway, do not place snow in the roadway or block drainage swales or culverts.

Be prepared for winter driving by carrying a blanket and emergency supplies in your vehicle.

Birchwood Lakes Maintenance Staff normally follows a pre-determined procedure in plowing the roads. Changes, however, may be made on an as-needed basis. Staff will begin plowing when there is approximately one and a half inch of snow on the road. Please be patient as many factors such as temperature, type of precipitation and changing weather patterns can have an effect on our efforts.

Notes from the Community Manager

Betty White Gross, CMCA, AMS

The Association has been moving forward on several projects even as the community may appear quiet due to the wintery weather upon us. In late November and early December GOE was utilized to determine and locate the Upper Birchwood Lake intake valve as a possible mechanism for utilization in the dam rehabilitation project. The diver was able to locate the valve and the Engineer will be reviewing the findings.

Wade Associates has been selected and entered into an agreement with the Association for a feasibility study regarding the pool. This study will provide an evaluation of the pool structure and immediate area, evaluation of the filter and chemical systems, development of a comprehensive report of the entire facility and determine a method and feasibility of repairs.

Meetings have been held with representatives from the DEP, Pike County Conservation District and Delaware Township in response to the road/drainage study completed by Cornerstone Consulting to determine permitting requirements for the forty-four "hot spots" included in the study. Cost estimates have now been obtained and provided to the Board of Directors and Road Maintenance & Construction Committee for review and possible inclusion in future con-

tracted roadwork.

The Association is also actively proceeding with collection efforts. Delinquent accounts are now being turned over to legal counsel after in-house collection efforts have been completed. This year over 160 delinquent accounts have been submitted to the attorney. To those members that have paid and keep their accounts current, thank you. Delinquent members should take collection notices seriously and contact the Association to make payment or alternate arrangements as soon as possible. Note as of January 1, 2011 a collection fee of \$300 will be assessed for each account processed for collection action.

Members of the Association are currently considering and voting on the 2011/2012 Budget, Reserve Withdrawals and an amendment to the By-Laws that would require Directors to sign a Code of Ethics. The Board of Directors has worked very hard to encourage all members in good standing to vote by additional notices on the 739 message board,

word of mouth and the distribution of flyers in the mailboxes at the entrances. The voting results will be available through the BLCA Office if you missed them. 2011/2012 Invoices will be mailed in early March and payment due by May 1, 2011. Requests for payment plans and the \$25 application fee should be submitted no later than April 15, 2011 to avoid additional charges. Deadline for payment in order to receive the discount will be noted on your dues billing statement.

A traffic study at the Route 739 entrance has been approved as requested by PennDOT. This study will provide data on the amount of traffic utilizing that area.

Summer will be here before we know it. Please consider joining a committee, attending a Board Meeting, participating in at least one community activity and becoming an active part of YOUR community. If you have any questions on what might be going on or how you could help, contact the BLCA Office.

Do You Know Where Your Children Are and What They are Doing?

We all love our children and want to keep them safe and we also hope that they are doing the right thing. Unfortunately, they stray off the "Good Path" sometimes. As parents it's up to us to see the signs and intervene and lead them back.

I'm sorry to say that there has been an awful amount of vandalism lately. Break-ins, street signs taken down and stolen, damage and spray painting of BLCA property, and radios and gate cards stolen from cars. Please lock your car at all times. Yes, even in your driveway.

Remember, we all pay the price for the damages in our dues. Let's all try to keep Birchwood a safe and beautiful community. Let's take pride in our home.

Parkinson's Awareness Walk

by Roy Kohan

Each year thousands of patients, their families and friends gather in New York's Central Park for a two-mile walk to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease and funds for research. Our son, Jeff, aged 43, has been diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's disease. He has been married to his wife Denise for 15 years and has three beautiful children. The whole Kohan family will be walking in this year's event in honor of Jeff and other loved ones who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's.

I hope that you will find it in your hearts to support our team and me by donating any amount in honor of Jeff and the many others who must deal with this disease. Please take action with me to find a cure for Parkinson's disease and keep our family in your prayers.

This year's walk will be in April. If there are any questions please call me at (201) 664-9627 or e-mail Kohanklan@AOL.com or to donate directly go to: www.unitywalk.org select donations and type in Jeff Kohan's name.

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Birchwood Lake Recreation Committee

FOR SENIORS ONLY

Very often we find it is easy to stop relating with people who once filled an important part in daily life. Sometimes our children have moved away or are so heavily involved in their own lives, with work, children and other obligations that they cannot spend a lot of time with us. Sometimes we just sit around bored with little to do. Do you feel like this sometimes? Well, then we have something that may make a difference. What do you think about being part of a Senior Citizen Club here in Birchwood? After all, what better way to look towards developing a new social network and social life than to meet and have fun with others who have the same interests you may have?

The thing is: we need to know if there is enough interest so we can get the ball rolling and have this in place for you by this spring. The daytime meetings will be held in our clubhouse, and can be set depending on how many times a month you wish to meet. These are things that can be decided once the club is formed. But to do so, we need your response.

If interested, it would be great to know what type of activities you enjoy, your favorite hobby, or what you think would make for a great club activity. Perhaps you have a talent, like sewing or knitting or painting, which can be taught or shared with others? Maybe you like playing cards, dominos, Scrabble or other board games. Isn't this a great way to help you get back into the rhythm of meeting new friends to do things with?

So kick up those heels and start doing those things you promised yourself you would do someday? Today is the best time to make that call and let us know of your interest. Why wait? Either email Linda White at lindalee4826@yahoo.com or call the BLCA office at 570-828-2111. Mention that you are calling about the Senior Citizen Club.

Just remember, if you email us, remember to "add your contact information, interests you have, hobbies, or just what you would hope this club will offer." This will help us in making this club become a reality. We hope to hear from you.

Birchwood Lake Recreation Committee

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

During the month of August, September, October, November and December 2010, five homes sold for less than \$100,000; three homes sold between \$101,000 and \$150,000; and four homes sold for more than \$150,000.

Birchwood Lakes welcomed the following new members into our community:

O'Grady, Snyder, Zielsdorff, Babcock Jr, Wright, Foster, Mabie, Brandao, Callen, Mawhinney, Hickey and McMahon

We encourage you to become an active part of the community and look forward to seeing you at community meetings and functions. Welcome neighbors!

GUIDELINES FOR LETTERS

Birchwood Lakes Community Association residents are invited to submit Letters to the Editor for publication in The Birchwood Voice. It is the intent of the Community Affairs Committee that publication of letters will encourage a civil discussion about important issues in the community. These are the committee guidelines:

- 1) All letters must include the member's name, address and telephone number and MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE AS NOTED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE LAST ISSUE. Names only will appear in print. Letters may be e-mailed to: editor.birchwoodlakes.net or dropped off at the office.
 - 2) All letters must be 300 words or less. Longer letters may be edited or returned to sender for editing.
 - 3) Letters to the Editor may not be inflammatory, derogatory, obscene, and libelous or discuss issues in terms of individuals in the community.
- EDITOR'S NOTES MAY BE ADDED to clarify or correct information.

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One Man's Opinion by David J. Friedrich'

I've been a resident since 1979. Over the years, I've visited friends residing in all the local communities but never desired to leave my "little piece of Birchwood." I always looked at Birchwood as an "unfinished painting" constantly evolving, striving to beautify and better itself for the common community good. Birchwood, a good place to raise families and attract new residents.

I've seen Boards of Directors whose talented individuals tried very hard to improve our community and others that were elected for popularity rather than ability and were not up to the task. At least they got involved and they tried. A voice that makes a suggestion or a complaint says something, it gets involved. A voice that stays mute when it should get involved says nothing and contributes nothing to change.

During the 80s, 90s and early years of this decade in particular, the Saturday Open Meetings at the Clubhouse hosted a huge number of homeowners aggressively voicing their opinions on various issues to the Boards. Those meetings to me illustrated Freedom of Speech at its best. People of different viewpoints com-

ing together to express them for the common good of our Community.

Recent years have brought some disturbing changes:

Less attendance at Open Board meetings: **WHY** – It's your community, don't you care? Don't stand in silence – attend and make your voice heard.

Less volunteers to serve on numerous very important committees vital to Birchwood's growth. Volunteer, anything you can do is deeply appreciated.

Pride of ownership – property maintenance. Although the large majority of homeowners maintain their homes and property beautifully and compliment their neighbor which also builds a harmonious relationship, some unfortunately do not. This **very small segment of homeowners** choose to violate Birchwood rules and fill their property with unsightly garbage and other objects

which attracts wild animals and endangers their neighbors. The Board has vigorously addressed this issue and summonses have and will continue to be issued to violators. Hopefully, this blight, which affects us all, will end quickly.

My friends, My neighbors and My fellow residents that I have not had the pleasure of meeting, I urge you Let's Unite, Let's Get Involved to build a stronger, more viable community for all to enjoy.

Email Us!

Have you ever wished you could contact the Board of Directors by email with a suggestion, comment or concern?..... The Board of Directors can now be reached by email at blboard@ptd.net.

(If you need an immediate response, please contact the BLCA Office.)

YOUR HOME IN WINTER

Winter weather brings its own challenges for homeowners. These tips can help you minimize damage to your home:

1. Make sure to check gutters, fascia and downspouts are working properly and in good repair. These are some of the first parts of your roof system to be affected by winter weather.
2. In the event of heavy winds, shingles can come loose and detach themselves from the roof. Make sure to visually check your roof after heavy winds to make sure no shingles are missing or damaged.
3. Once snow and ice arrive, periodically check for ice damming along your gutters - ice dams can prevent water from draining properly.
4. Be aware that if snow builds up on your roof, it can cause debilitating damage to your roof system and the supports underneath.



Working on the valve.

READ IT ON THE WEB

Updated information is on the web www.birchwoodlakes.net. You can also post messages about community affairs, write to the editor, or place a free advertisement.



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RECREATION COMMITTEE'S CHILDREN'S PARTIES

Photos by Nancy Halliday. More photos are on www.Birchwoodlakes.net gallery page.



**Halloween
Fun!**



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RECREATION COMMITTEE'S CHILDREN'S PARTIES

Photos by Nancy Halliday. More photos are on www.Birchwoodlakes.net gallery page.



Visit with Santa!

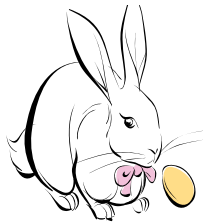


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Here's wishing everyone a safe & happy Winter, from Ruth & Seth at Journal Newspapers!



Mark your Calendar NOW ...for April 16

Attend Birchwood Lakes Annual Easter Egg Hunt & meet the Easter Bunny. Will you be one of the lucky ones to find the 'golden' egg, or jeweled egg or perhaps you will win the 'hard luck' egg award?

BLCA T-Shirts & Tote Bags for sale at the office.

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Board Meeting Minutes

This is an abbreviated record of the minutes. A complete copy may be obtained in the BLCA office or at www.birchwoodlakes.net

August 10, 2010

The new tree removal policy is still pending.

The Board approved fee increases, offered a \$500 reward for information leading to conviction of recent thefts and vandalism, a DJ for the adult dinner dance, newsletter policy, and the volunteer luncheon on August 28.

The Manager's report included; remedial work on Middle Lake outlet pipe was completed, permanent closing of Crossing Road awaiting Township approval, DEP Dam Safety indicates Lower Lake dam is in good condition but vegetation needs to be cut back, and Pike County Conservation District indicates there will not be a 2011 Gypsy Moth program.

August 20, 2010

Special Board Meeting

The meeting was held to discuss adding a 3-inch cap to East Lake

dam. After going through each discussion point, the Board took a vote not to add the cap.

August 28, 2010

Annual Meeting

President Ritson gave an overview of accomplishments and future challenges. Some key achievements are; The Lot Improvement Program was revamped, Amnesty Program was successful, a Code of Ethics was introduced, road drainage study was completed, work has begun on revamping the maintenance yard. Challenges; more volunteers are needed for the Board and committees, delinquent accounts, inadequate reserve money.

Bill Owens, BLCA Accountant advised that the community has a strong financial position but the reserve fund needs to be built up to meet future work.

September 10, 2010

Approved write-offs of over \$130, agreed to close the library at the clubhouse because of lack of use and donate the books, approved specific survey of pool

area and a structural inspection and evaluation, approved new tree removal policy, and will return surplus SBA Loan money.

Manager's report included; roadwork currently in progress, a

pickup truck was purchased, annual dam inspections were conducted, the reports are pending.

October 8, 2010

Received 2 proposals for traffic study as required by PENNDOT,

approved company for Upper Lake to locate intake valve, accepted proposal to replace fence around maintenance yard, approved purchase of 23 lots in Repository sale for \$25 each.

Committee Reports

At each Board meeting the committee chairperson gives a brief overview of what the committees have been working on. More up-to date reports are found on our website as part of the complete Board Minutes.

August 10, Roads & Maintenance; two speed humps being installed, Community Affairs, working on newsletter options, Community safety, committee has been dormant but meeting is scheduled, Recreation, attendance

and interest in activities was very good, By-Laws, completed changes to Directors in good standing, meeting attendance, and code of ethics, Budget & Finance, working on new budget, Property Development, committee has been inactive but the chairperson hopes to get it going again, Rules & Regulations; the Board has asked them to institute a 1st and 2nd reading, Lake Management; the well water seminar was disappointingly attended, Capital

Projects; preliminary sketch received for maintenance facility, the Pool sub-committee has had four design companies in and is exploring options.

September 10, Community Safety; had a meeting with five members attending, installed "Drive Safely" signs, Beautification; planted mums throughout the community, Capital Projects; developed RFP for pool.

October 8, Budget & Finance; working on the budget, preliminary to be submitted for November Board meeting, Recreation; there will be a Halloween Party on October 23.

Avoiding Conflict with the Neighbors

by Community

Associations Institute

We all can just get along. The key? Communication. It's often the best way to prevent and resolve conflict before it reaches the legal system. You don't have to be friends or spend time together to achieve a peaceful coexistence, but you should try to be a good neighbor and follow these tips:

Say hello. At the mailbox, while walking the dog or when you see a moving van arrive, introduce yourself. Learn your neighbors' names and regularly offer a friendly greeting.

Provide a heads up. If you're planning a construction project, altering your landscaping or hosting a big party, contact your neighbors beforehand.

Do unto others. Treat neighbors as you would like to be treated. Be considerate about noise from vehicles, stereos, pets, etc.

Know your differences. Make an effort to understand each other. Differences in age, ethnic background and years in the neighborhood can lead to different expectations or misunderstandings.

Consider the view. Keep areas of your property that others can see presentable.

Appreciate them. If the neigh-

bors do something you like, let them know. They'll be pleased you noticed, and it'll be easier to talk later if they do something you don't like.

Stay positive. Most people don't try to create problems. If a neighbor does something that irritates you, don't assume it was deliberate.

Talk honestly. Tolerance is important, but don't let a real irritation go because it seems unimportant or hard to discuss. Let your neighbors know if something they do annoys.

Be respectful. Talk directly to your neighbors if there's a problem. Gossiping with others can damage relationships and create trouble.

Remain calm. If a neighbor mentions a problem they have with you, thank them for the input. You don't have to agree or justify any behavior. Wait for any anger to subside before responding.

Listen carefully. When discussing a problem, try to understand your neighbor's position and why he or she feels that way.

Take your time. Take a break to think about what you and your neighbor have discussed. Arrange to finish the conversation at another time.

Looking for Up-To-Date Information?

Go to the Web at

www.birchwoodlakes.net
for:

- ✓ Board Minutes
- ✓ Notices
- ✓ Calendar
- ✓ Photos
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PA Home Repair Loan & Grant Program

USDA Rural Development recognizes the home repair needs of eligible rural homeowners. A 504 loan to those income eligible and a 504 Grant to seniors age 62 and older (or a combination) assist very-low income and other income eligible rural homeowners to make **vital** repairs. For further information contact the USDA Rural Development office in your area. Rural Development employees will help you complete an application. Visit the website to find the officer serving your county www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa or email: rdinfo@pausda.gov for additional information.

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Birchwood Lakes Public
Safety 828-6009

Carolyn's Recipe Recommendations

by Carolyn Martin

I love to cook and collect cooking books and magazines. I have always loved the kitchen. Since we are busy people, I use simple recipes. Please try them and enjoy the results.

Corn Pudding

- 1 can creamed corn, 14-³/₄ oz
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 can evaporated milk
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 ½ tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Pour into a greased 1-¹/₂ quart casserole.

Bake at 350 for 50 minutes to 1 hour, let stand for 10 minutes. Serves 6.

This a nice company dish, I have never had leftovers.

Cheese Squares

- 1-cup Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup mayo
- ¼ cup chopped green onion, optional
- Loaf of party rye bread

Mix ingredients until smooth. Spread on bread slices. Put on a cookie sheet and broil until brown.

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East Lake Dam Cap

When the BLCA board made its decision not to cap East Lake Dam, it was based on the following two expert opinions.

B.F. Environmental Consultants Inc
15 Hillcrest Drive
Dallas, PA 18612

Ecological Solutions Inc.

P.O. Box 193 1 Hillside Road Conyngham, PA 18219

570-788-1721

July 26, 2010

Charles A. Ritson
President, Birchwood Lakes Community Association
212 Aspen Rd.
Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328

Re: Birchwood Lake - Impoundment

Dear Mr. Ritson,

Based on my experience with the past and current dam at Birchwood Lakes, it is my professional opinion that the reddish and discolor water that appears to seep from the ground downgradient of the dam is water from the lake. When the dam was initially evaluated, these seepage units were observed downgradient of the old dam structure. This does not mean the dam is weakened or faulty, but means that the base of the lake is "permeable", i.e., water can move through the material.

During the on-site visit, I inspected the site, dam area, a number of wetland areas and seepages, and the basements for three residents. During the evaluation of the basements, the basements showed evidence of a seasonal high water table. This evidence include a combination of water marks, standing water, and the foundation walls and floors showed signs of both iron (red) and manganese (dark red to near black) staining. This iron and manganese staining was also observed in the groundwater discharges within the adjacent wetland complex and other areas downgradient of the dam. It is my professional opinion that the source of the water that discharges in the wetland complex and adjacent to the dam is water that is either moving through the dam or water that is moving through the base of the lake and under the dam.

Since the Association is considering raising the water level in the lake by as much as three inches, it would be my professional opinion that an increase in the water level of the lake would result in an increase in the volume of water that discharges from the lake via subsurface leakage through the earthen berm and under the berm. This subsurface leakage would discharge to the adjacent wetland areas, would cause an increase in the degree of wetness for downgradient lots, and most likely increase the wetness and degree of saturation in the crawl spaces and "basements" of the three existing homes downgradient and adjacent to the lake in the area that was inspected.

If the Association wanted to consider this change, it would be advisable to complete the following:

1. in addition to increasing the height of the dam, it may be necessary to protect the dam from slumping and erosion. This would include planting additional native vegetation and requesting landowners to maintain a more native shoreline;
2. it may be advisable to install a subsurface permeable barrier along the full length of the earthen dam and partially into the lake - this barrier would extend from the new high water point to at least 10 feet into the lake; and
3. it would be advisable to monitor the flow and water level at one or more of the wetland seepages to document and monitor the change in the water level. This would be done to ensure that the additional water leakage is not undermining the integrity of the structure.

If the Lake Association wants to stabilize the earthen dam to fill in the low points on the earthen dam without increasing the maximum water level of the lake, this activity would most likely improve the appearance of the earthen dam and help to protect the dam from surface erosion. Where possible, the earthen dam should have a native vegetation and not used as a manicured lawn.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (570) 335-1947.

Respectfully submitted,



Mr. Brian Oram, PG
<http://www.bfenvironmental.com>

AUG 09 2010

Birchwood Lakes Community Association
c/o Mr. Chas Ritson
Sent: via e-mail

Re: Raising the height of
the East Birchwood Dam

Dear Mr. Ritson:

In response to your question as to whether raising the level of the dam on East Birchwood Lake would improve the ecology and overall condition of the lake I have the following comments.

1. Currently, East Birchwood Lake has a maximum depth of less than eight feet. Raising the height of the dam to increase the depth by a few inches would be extremely costly and ecologically insignificant.
2. Secchi depth readings taken over the past few years indicate that water transparency is excellent. Sunlight is able to reach the bottom of the lake throughout the entire growing season, which allows submerged plant growth to thrive in the lake. Since sunlight penetrates the water column almost 2 times deeper than the secchi depth, increasing the water depth by a few inches would not prevent the growth of submerged vegetation.
3. Deeper lakes often provide better habitat for fish. However, increasing the depth of the lake by a few inches would not increase or improve the quality of the existing fishery. In warmwater fisheries where bass are the dominant predator, habitat benefits are realized when water depths are greater than 12 feet. Unless the lake is dredged and physically made deeper, East Birchwood Lake will never provide deep water habitat.

Based on these few simple observations, I would not recommend raising the height of the dam. Ecologically the water quality in the dam would not be improved or benefit in any way. The same management practices employed now would have to be continued in the future to maintain the lake. Therefore, the monies spent to raise the dam a few inches would be wasted.

August 9, 2010
Mr. Ritson

I hope my response has answered your question regarding the ecological benefits of raising the dam a few inches. Basically, there would be no benefit. If you have any more questions or concerns regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Gallagher

Joseph E. Gallagher
Consulting Ecologist

BLCA Curfew

BLCA has a curfew of 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. As a courtesy to all members, please observe the curfew hours.

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Criminal Mischief

Recently the Association and a private property owner have been the victims of criminal mischief and vandalism. Please help us by reporting any incidents you may observe immediately to the Pennsylvania State Police at 570-226-5718, as well as the Association at 570-828-2111 and 570-499-8301. Information on any incident should also be reported utilizing the same telephone numbers.

Any of the following may be considered criminal mischief:

Negligently, recklessly, or intentionally damaging property of another by fire, explosives, or other dan-

gerous means,

Tampering with the property of another to endanger a person or property,

Defacing or damaging property with graffiti, or

Intentionally damaging real or personal property of another.

The Association has contacted the State Police and filed a report. Please help us find the individual(s) that damaged Association property and deter future incidents by being alert and promptly reporting anything unusual. Charges can range from a misdemeanor to a felony depending on the value of the property that was damaged.

Notes from the Gardener

by Terry Schettini, Ph.D. - Horticulture Educator, County Extension Director

Penn State Extension in Lackawanna County

New Year's Resolutions for Gardeners

I know, making New Year's resolutions is so weeks ago ... but hey, there's still time to make some resolutions that will give you a healthier garden, help protect your family and the environment, and (without having to make another resolution) probably help you lose a few pounds along the way!

Here are 12 resolutions for the coming year, adapted from a list developed by Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor from the University of Vermont.

1. Start a compost pile for leaves, plant residues, and kitchen scraps to be mixed in your soil as compost or around your plants as mulch to enrich your garden and improve plant growth.

2. Use biological controls whenever feasible for insects and diseases in the garden, starting with planting pest-resistant varieties.

3. Apply pesticides (whether conventional or organic) only as a last resort and always use them safely and prudently.

4. Store all garden chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.) in their original containers, out of reach of children and pets, and preferably in a locked storage area.

5. Use fertilizers only as indicated by soil tests, and use organic

forms whenever possible.

6. Mow properly (often, not too high or low), and set up your mower to "leave grass clippings lay" (or compost them) so they will recycle organic matter and nutrients back into the soil.

7. Conserve water by mulching, using efficient watering methods such as drip irrigation systems, and selecting drought-resistant ornamental plants.

8. Develop a landscape plan that works with the environment, for

example, ground covers on steep banks to prevent soil erosion and shade trees on the sunny side of a home to act as a natural air conditioner. Landscaping also can help reduce temperature extremes, filter out air pollutants, and stop noise.

9. Create natural wildlife habitats by planting trees and shrubs that provide food or cover or by leaving brush and undergrowth in certain areas for birds, rabbits, and other small animals to use as a

protective haven.

10. Provide food and water for the birds and continue to feed them once they have come to depend on you.

11. Establish and maintain pollinator-friendly plantings and use gardening methods that protect and nurture both "wild" and

managed pollinators.

12. Encourage others, whenever possible, to do all they can to help preserve the environment and our natural resources.

If you have questions, contact your local extension office. In Pike County call our garden help line at 296-3400 or e-mail Pikeext@psu.edu.

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