

# Geneva Lake Guardian



GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 412  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147  
262-203-7108  
GlaOffice@aol.com  
www.genevalakeassoc.org

Spring 2022

*Our mission is to enhance the conservation, preservation, environmental integrity and general welfare of Geneva Lake with timely and issue-centered communications and education through a wide membership base of area residents and local businesses.*

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GENEVA LAKE ASSOC., INC. • PROTECTING GENEVA LAKE SINCE 1935

## Addressing water quality issues

### *Water Alliance reports progress*

#### OFFICERS

##### PRESIDENT

Mark S. Lillie

##### VICE PRESIDENT

E. Lynn Grayson

##### TREASURER

Robin Randolph

##### SECRETARY

Robert T. Morava, Jr.

##### EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

James A. Smith

#### DIRECTORS

David Anderson

Brigid J. Cashman

Dianna Colman

William B. Duncan

Tricia Forbeck

Thomas G. Gardiner

James W. Gee

John P. Goggin

Lynn Grayson

Brian Griffith

Dana Hagenah

Scott Craven Jones

Sally Jouris

Patrick J. Kenny

Robert W. Klockars

Mark S. Lillie

James W. McAvoy

William McClayton

Robert T. Morava, Jr.

Thomas Nickols

Karl Otzen

Robin Randolph

James Reuland

Thomas T. Stuhley

Frank K. Voris

Susan Whiting

David B. Williams

#### HONORARY DIRECTORS

Emil A. Baumbach, Jr.

Thomas J. Cashman

Martha Craven

Alice J. Morava

Thomas E. Reynolds, Jr.

Howard A. Vaughan, Jr.

by **Karen Yancey**

**Executive Director**

**Geneva Lake Conservancy**

The Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake has reported some important results in the last few months. GLA is an active participant in the Water Alliance's work.

"We are pleased to have so many organizations moving forward in a more coordinated fashion to preserve the health of Geneva Lake. Continued development, severe weather, and increased recreational use impact the Lake's water quality," said Tom Nickols, co-chair of the Alliance and Vice-Chair of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, which is leading the Water Alliance's effort.

These results include:

- Obtained a \$25,000 Surface Water grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to update the Geneva Lake Management Plan. Once the plan is complete, projects recommended in the plan will be eligible for additional DNR grants.
- Worked with the Odling Gravel Pit in Williams Bay to conduct remedial action to stop the flow of gravel and sediment from the property into the Lake. The new owners have completed all the remedial actions requested by the Walworth County Conservation Office and further testing will be completed this spring to ensure no additional sediment is entering Southwick Creek that flows into Geneva Lake.
- Covered the costs for two additional farmers in the Geneva Lake watershed to plant cover crops, which reduces agricultural runoff into the Lake.
- Completed testing of approximately 15 of the 50 tributaries that flow into Geneva Lake to identify those with high phosphorus runoff and develop plans to mitigate the pollution.
- Worked with the DNR Healthy Lakes program to plant more than

14 buffer strips and rain gardens along the Lake to filter phosphorus and other pollutants and obtained funding to plant an additional 20 gardens.

- Completed an experimental season of the CD3 vacuum equipment at area boat launches to remove invasive species such as Starry Stonewort from boats entering and exiting the Lake. The Water Alliance also plans to schedule training sessions with all municipal launch employees this spring on how to make better use of the equipment.
- Obtained and implemented a DNR Clean Boats, Clean Waters grant to fund the cost of summer employees at boat launches to educate boaters on the importance of cleaning boats before they enter the Lake.

In addition, the Water Alliance encourages local property owners to avoid using fertilizers or chemicals on your property, which can encourage the growth of algae and algae blooms that make the lake unhealthy for swimming, fishing and boating. Planting oaks and other native trees, shrubs and plants along the shore also will help prevent soil erosion and phosphorus runoff.

If you would like more information on how you can make your property more ecologically healthy to help protect the Lake, contact the Geneva

*see Water Alliance, page 2*

Geneva Lake Association, Inc.

#### **Annual Meeting**

*Members and guests are invited*

The Annual Meeting of the GLA is scheduled for Saturday morning, **August 6**. The location will be announced on the GLA web site and via email notice through *GLA Waves*. This will be an in-person meeting unless conditions warrant otherwise.



## The President's Desk...



Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of *The Guardian*! For the past 87 years, the Geneva Lake Association has pursued its mission to inform and educate its membership

on matters that are important to the area it serves. And while we have not changed our mission in any way, it's worth noting another dimension of our work: using our resources and platform to help *coordinate* and *increase awareness* of the efforts that various organizations and agencies around the Lake are undertaking.

In this issue of *The Guardian*, we continue our focus on water quality, with an important update from Karen Yancey of the Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake. As the article highlights, the Water Alliance, led by Charles Colman and GLA Director Tom Nickols,

has made impressive progress over the past couple of years. In addition, GLA Vice President Lynn Grayson provides a detailed look at a number of other resources – both from Wisconsin and beyond - that are available to help maintain a healthy lake and learn from others about experiences we have in common. We also provide a status report on the rather mixed story for the Starry Stonewort situation and what steps the authorities plan to do going forward to deal with this latest invasive species.

Another topic that this issue begins to explore is a growing concern from our members about excessive noise from disrespectful boaters, especially late at night. We offer some insights on what local officials have attempted to do to mitigate this problem and offer some ideas for their additional consideration. GLA plans to make "lake use" concerns

(boat speed, boat traffic, wave impact, etc.) an agenda item for our next Annual Meeting.

Cody Pillman from Linn Fire and EMS provides an update on all the different ways the Fire Boat is being put to good use, and expresses his appreciation for GLA's role in providing this important asset for lake safety.

Finally, Adam McCulloch describes the progress on the LENSS project (Lakeshore Environmental Night Sky Sensor), which is a student-led effort to monitor and raise awareness of light pollution around Geneva Lake.

As always, thank you for your continued support of GLA, and we wish you the best for an enjoyable summer season!

Mark Lillie

President, Geneva Lake Association

### *Excessive noise is one of them*

## GLA members raise increasing concern on lake use issues

Have you noticed increased boat traffic on weekends, bigger boat sizes and wakes, excessive boat speed, and loud noise from boats on the lake? These issues (and especially boat noise at night) have generated greater focus and discussion among our members in the last couple of years.

While the overwhelming majority of lake boaters are respectful of other boaters and property owners, a growing number don't seem to comprehend or appreciate how far and clear voices and music/noise carry and amplify over water. Or how much damage their waves and speed can do.

So, what can be done to stem this growing noise and nuisance issue among boaters? The sad answer is not as much as we might prefer. The Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency (262-245-9824) may be able to deal with a noise/nuisance issue if they happen to see and hear it, but their boats and officers are not on Geneva Lake early in the morning nor late at night due to staffing and funding constraints.

The Geneva Lake Water Safety Patrol (262-245-6577) is not an enforce-

ment agency.

The Town of Linn, which includes the most Geneva Lake frontage, and its Chairman, James Weiss, understand the issues but are hamstrung and frustrated with the lack of the necessary ordinances to deal with the noise/music issues and with the lack of a coordinated effort to address the issue. Efforts to draft and codify meaningful ordinances have not materialized.

So, what can citizens do to improve the path going forward? Here are some suggestions:

1. Encourage your local officials to support a comprehensive and coordinated noise ordinance.
2. Support increased funding for an expanded presence of Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency on Geneva Lake in the early morning and late evenings, especially on weekends and holidays.
3. Enforce the after-sunset speed limit on Geneva Lake.
4. Raise awareness to educate boaters to noise and nuisance issues and the negative impact to the lake front property of epic wakes and waves.

GLA will dedicate a portion of its next Annual Meeting to further address these issues, for the benefit of all who enjoy the Lake and its surroundings.

### *Water Alliance*

**(Continued from page 1)**

Lake Conservancy for a Conservation@Home visit this summer. Please email [outreach@genevalakeconservancy.org](mailto:outreach@genevalakeconservancy.org) or call 262-275-5700.

*[The Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake was formed in 2019 to address multiple issues impacting the Lake's health. The Water Alliance is led by the Geneva Lake Conservancy and its active members include the Geneva Lake Association, Geneva Lake Environmental Agency, Walworth County Conservation Office, WDNR, Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission, Villages of Williams Bay and Fontana, City of Lake Geneva, Town of Linn, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and other organizations and individuals. For more information contact the Conservancy at [glc@genevalakeconservancy.org](mailto:glc@genevalakeconservancy.org)]*

# Starry Stonewort not spreading significantly

*GLEA and DNR appear to be pausing any further remediation of Starry Stonewort after most recent assessment*

Many of our members have been keenly interested and concerned about Starry Stonewort (SSW), an invasive species first discovered in Geneva Lake in 2018. Two recent studies provide a mixed story about SSW's presence in the Lake. Although a variety of treatment techniques have failed to eradicate the weed, it also appears that SSW has not spread significantly beyond previously known and isolated spots.

The Geneva Lake Environmental Agency (GLEA, formerly directed by Ted Peters and now led by Jake Schmidt) has been managing the SSW issue since its discovery. According to GLEA's most recent review dated January 20, 2022, SSW seems to continue to be concentrated in the Trinke Lagoon and nearby "outlet" area and a "colony" site in slightly deeper water further to the east. Despite hand pulling efforts in both 2020 and 2021, SSW has reappeared in these areas, but not spread in any meaningful way. Chemical applications have also not eradicated the weed.

GLEA, in consultation with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (the official permitting authority), prepared and posted "*A Review with Recommendations of the 2021 Hand Pulling of Starry Stonewort (Nitellopsis obtuse) on Geneva Lake.*" (A full copy of the Review is also posted on the



*Starry stonewort grows into a thick mat*

GLA website.) The Review provides significant detail on GLEA's past efforts and plan forward. "*Despite chemical treatment and hand pulling efforts to remove and control starry stonewort, there appears to be little evidence of SSW reduction. 2020 hand pulling of SSW at the Trinke Lagoon's outlet, but it was found in the same areas again in 2021. 2020 hand pulling showed little if any impact on SSW at the deep-water colony site.*"

Citing DNR guidance, the Review states that "*The most recent attitude towards managing populations of SSW where it is mixed with native plants is to disturb the site the least amount possible. Removing native plants or causing disturbance to the existing plant community may open the areas for the invasive SSW to establish new populations in the disturbed sites. \*\*\* Hand pulling may encourage the spread of SSW by disturbing a stabilized community and by dispersing bulbils and other plant material to enhance colonization. Studies in Minnesota have indicated that disturbing existing population of SSW by rapid reduction of biomass may stimulate bulbil production, development, and growth.*" [GLEA Review at pp. 5-6.]

Accordingly, the GLEA is not recommending any further hand pulling in 2022 "*for fear of increasing the presence of SSW,*" and instead intends to monitor the SSW areas this summer. [Id. at 6-7.]

GLEA's Review follows a prior study conducted by SEWRPC (Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission) titled "*Survey of Starry Stonewort Population in Geneva Lake (September 28, 2021).*" This detailed study provides additional technical background and analysis on SSW's evolution



*Starry stonewort with reproductive white star-shaped bulbil*

in Geneva Lake, and this study is also available on GLA's website. SEWRPC states that "*Starry stonewort is a notoriously difficult invasive species to control. Numerous treatments have been attempted in Southeastern Wisconsin lakes, including chemical treatment, hand pulling, diver assisted suction harvesting (DASH), dredging, and water level drawdowns, but no Wisconsin lake has yet been successful in completely eradicating its SSW population. While some of these treatments have resulted in temporary reductions, SSW populations have been able to recover and sometimes even exceed their pretreatment levels. Consequently, published WDNR guidance on managing SSW focuses on monitoring the population and preventing its spread to other waterbodies while more effective management techniques are researched and evaluated.*" [SEWRPC Review at p. 8.]

In conclusion, it appears that GLEA and DNR will not be undertaking any further remediation of SSW in Geneva Lake in 2022, and their future actions will depend on the results of their monitoring activities this summer. GLA will continue to keep its membership informed as we learn of further developments. In the meantime, additional details or questions about SSW should be directed to GLEA or DNR.

## Am I a current member?

GLA members are encouraged to renew their memberships on an annual basis to receive the *Directory* and to be listed in the *Directory* as members. See the information on your mailing label to determine if your membership is current.

# LENSS program measures atmospheric light around Geneva Lake

by Adam McCulloch

Living in the Geneva Lake area, it is clear that, between the people and organizations, everyone here cares deeply about the health of the environment and the lake itself.

The Lakeshore Environmental Night Sky Sensor (LENSS) project came along in 2019 to help monitor and improve awareness of the effects of light pollution on the health of the environment, wildlife, and even ourselves.

LENSS is a student-led project advanced weekly by local high school students who want to make an impact by protecting and conserving the natural resources in the Geneva Lake area. Everything from the design of the sensor to analysis of the data is crafted by Geneva Lake Astrophysics and STEAM (GLAS) students with the help of local mentors.

Ultimately 20 or more sensors will measure the amount of light in the atmosphere every night. Each is programmed to automatically send that information to GLAS databases where it can be analyzed. With this data, we can gain a better understanding of the amount of light pollution in the Geneva Lake area.

Light pollution has negative effects on many different aspects of our environment. Too much artificial light at night affects plants and wildlife and even our

own health.

Wildlife effects vary greatly by taxa, but can include: an inability to navigate by starlight, increased predation due to attraction to light and increased predator visibility of prey, disrupted or altered food chains, reduced reproductive activity and lower populations, and decreased pollination services.

Even our plants, often thought of as stagnant, experience significant effects of light pollution. Trees, for example, receive temperature and light cues from their environment about when to bloom. When light pollution alters the landscape, it appears that the days are longer and spring has arrived, and trees begin to bud. For these trees that bloom too early, lowered winter defense systems can cause trees to die from frost when they normally would not, or produce their leaves and food resources too early in the season to survive. This phenomena also reduces food resources for migratory species, who arrive too late to enjoy the trees' seeds, fruits, and nuts.

The end goal of this project is to be able to accurately assess light pollution in the Geneva Lake area with hard facts and figures. With this comes a public outreach portion: advocating for dark skies and influencing positive change in the community's light pollution strategies.

Over the past year, students and staff have been able to deploy eight sensors along the shoreline of Geneva Lake. All of the sensors are hosted by homeowners from around the lake that volunteered their property to assist the LENSS project. As of March 2022, the majority of the sensors are located on the western shore, so we are looking for additional volunteers from other areas of the lake. If you are interested in hosting a sensor or want to learn more about light pollution and dark skies, please contact us by emailing [contact@glaseducation.org](mailto:contact@glaseducation.org).

Stars up, lights down!

*[Adam McCulloch is the Planetarium and Outreach Coordinator for Geneva Lake Astrophysics and STEAM, operating in a storefront of Inspiration Ministries.]*

## Fire boat update

by Water Captain Cody Pillman  
Linn Fire & EMS

On behalf of the Town of Linn Fire & EMS we again wish to thank GLA members for your generous donation and help in acquiring the fire boat. Christened *The Guardian* (as in the GLA newsletter), it has proven to be a great asset, utilized in a variety of ways to help protect and serve our community since it was put into service.

There have been some memorable calls for service in which it was utilized over the last few years. Our crews have utilized it for several water rescues and /or dive calls for various people in distress on Geneva Lake. It has been used to put out boat fires on the water and supply water for structure fires near the lake as well.

This boat's primary design/function was to put out fires and supply water for fire extinguishment, however the members here have thought outside the box and have gone above and beyond to utilize this resource to its fullest potential in each and every way possible. This is all done in the name of helping the citizens and visitors of the Geneva Lake area. We are very grateful for this special tool and want you to know that it is being utilized well here.

We wish all of you many safe and happy years ahead on and near Geneva Lake from all of us at the Town of Linn Fire & EMS department.



As an Elkhorn High School senior, Griffen Moon soldered components on a light sensor, one of twenty or more that will be placed around the Geneva Lake shore.

Photo by Kate Meredith.

# Lake News Updates for GLA Members

by E. Lynn Grayson  
GLA Vice President

GLA advances its mission of conservation, preservation, environmental integrity, and the general welfare of Geneva Lake with timely and issue-centered communication and education through a wide membership base of area residents and local businesses. GLA understands the critical importance of collaborating with other interested stakeholders and staying current on new regulatory developments, technical innovations to improve water quality, and other insights on how best to manage environmental challenges facing Geneva Lake. Summarized below are some key updates that may be of interest to GLA members.

## Lake Wawasee Receives National Water Quality Initiative Designation

Lake Wawasee, located near Syracuse, Indiana, is the state's largest natural, spring-fed lake. Lake Wawasee and Geneva Lake share common interests and concerns related to protection of water quality in their lakes. As a result, GLA has begun developing a working relationship with the Wawasee Area Conservancy (WACF) to monitor its progress with the Wawasee Inlets Nutrients Study (WINS).

Launched in 2018, the goal of WINS, a water quality sampling and data collection initiative, is to pinpoint areas where water pollution is occurring and provide data that will help reduce pollutants and imbalances. The water quality data and the good work of the WACF arising from this study resulted in Lake Wawasee's recognition in December 2021 as a National Water Quality Initiative Designation.

This premier USDA program focuses on partnerships between federal, state, local and private resources to accelerate voluntary on-farm conservation investments. These investments benefit soil health and water quality by reducing erosion and nutrient runoff and promoting practices such as cover crops and reduced tillage to improve soil health. This designation will make the Wawasee Area Watershed a priority for federal funding.

WACF already has received \$16,000 to fund an initial readiness

phase to identify the opportunity areas and resource needs, develop goals and establish metrics to track project progress. Once completed, this will unlock significant federal cost-sharing money in support of partners in the farming community for projects such as: cover crops and no-till farming; restoring and protecting wetlands adjacent to lakes, rivers or streams; and other practices that help reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and reduce pollution.

More information about the USDA's National Water Quality Initiative can be found on the Agency's website at [National Water Quality Initiative | NRCS \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/nwqi)

## WDNR's Aquatic Plant Management Rule

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Aquatic Plant Management (APM) Program is undergoing rule revisions for both NR 107 and NR 109, related to chemical and mechanical/manual management of aquatic plants, respectively. These regulatory developments are increasingly important to GLA members in connection with Starry Stonewort identification in Geneva Lake and concerns associated with its management and control as discussed elsewhere in this edition of *The Guardian*.

As a member of the Wisconsin Lakes, we are monitoring and tracking these regulatory developments to better understand WDNR's policies and the options available to manage aquatic plant invasive species like Starry Stonewort.

More information about WDNR's aquatic plant management rule and recent developments are available on the Agency's website at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/lakes/plants/rules>

## Wisconsin Water Week April 4-8, 2022

Wisconsin Water Week will be celebrated this year from April 4-8. Water is fundamental to Wisconsin's identity. Wisconsin Water Week is a time for everyone and anyone to learn more about what's happening with our precious water resources and how they can be involved in protecting and restoring them. To learn more about the events and activities planned statewide for 2022 Wisconsin Water Week, please visit <https://wisconsinwaterweek.org/>

An important part of Wisconsin Water Week is the annual Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention to be held April 6-8 in Stevens Point. This year's theme is *Protecting What We Love for the Future*—a concept often expressed by GLA members regarding Geneva Lake. The 44<sup>th</sup> annual convention will feature hands-on workshops and engaging presentations during this year's event centered around this theme of protecting our water resources. The look "to the future" means convention programs also will be focusing on success stories and recommendations of resilience, adaptation, and action in a changing climate.

All are welcome to join this unique group of citizen scientists, businesses, and lake, river, and wetland professionals. This event will also have a virtual component for those who are unable to attend in person.

To learn more about the convention or to register for programs, visit <https://wisconsinwaterweek.org/home/lakes-and-rivers-convention/>

Wisconsin Water Week and the related websites are sponsored by the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership. This Partnership joins science, education, and citizens to empower people to work together to care for our lakes. Since its genesis in the early 1970s, the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership has been recognized as a national model of collaboration.

The Partnership has three core partners: the [Department of Natural Resources](https://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/) (which supplies scientific research, technical expertise and regulatory authority), the [Extension Lakes Program](https://www.wisconsinlakes.org/) (which provides supporting educational materials and programs), and [Wisconsin Lakes](https://www.wisconsinlakes.org/) (which mobilizes citizens to be advocates for lakes). GLA is a member of the Wisconsin Lakes.

This partnership is a statewide, multi-faceted effort that reaches far beyond the core groups to include regional, county, tribal, non-profit, and federal partners. The partnership's goal is to continue to protect and preserve our shared water legacy and support those meeting the challenges that come with the management and stewardship of Wisconsin's lakes.

# Geneva Lake Guardian



GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 412  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

PRSRRT FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
DELAVAN, WI  
PERMIT NO. 307

*Placeholder for address.  
Remove for publication*

*Check your label to see the  
status of your membership*

---

## GLA Membership Application/Renewal Form

All persons interested in enhancing the conservation, preservation, environmental integrity and general welfare of Geneva Lake and its surrounding area are welcome as members. The tax deductible contributions requested of members are as follows:

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **Regular Membership**  
Annual Contribution \$50
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **Sustaining Membership**  
Annual Contribution \$75
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **Contributing Membership**  
Annual Contribution \$100
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **Donor Membership**  
Annual Contribution \$150
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **Benefactor Membership**  
Annual Contribution \$250 or more
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **Commercial Membership**  
Annual Contribution \$100 or more

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**(as you want to be listed in the Directory)**

Check here to use the data that is on file and or...

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

(for all mailings) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Geneva Area Address \_\_\_\_\_

(if not the same) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Pier Number \_\_\_\_\_ (if none, use LG, F, WB, WAL, etc)

Subdivision or Association (If any) \_\_\_\_\_

Estate Name (ex. "Heavenly Acres") \_\_\_\_\_

Send Membership Form and check to:  
Geneva Lake Association, Inc. (GLA)  
PO Box 412  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

**All Contributions are Tax Deductible**

**How do I know if my membership is current?**

Just check your mailing address on this publication. The status of your membership in the GLA is noted in the line above your name.

**Online membership application/payment is also found on the GLA website: [www.genevalakeassoc.org](http://www.genevalakeassoc.org)**