



Big Star Lake Party Line

Spring/Summer
2026

Presidents Corner:

The Mission of the Big Star Lake Association (BSLA) is to protect, preserve, and enhance the natural beauty and environmental health of Big Star Lake and its surrounding areas. The association endeavors to foster a sense of community among its members and to promote responsible use and enjoyment of the lake's resources.

Hard to believe another Summer of fun is just around the corner on Big Star Lake! We have a lot of fun events scheduled for the Summer and have much to share with our members. Our Annual General Membership Meeting will be held Saturday May 23rd – 9:30am at the Chapel. Please join us as we will discuss in further detail everything your board members have been working on as well as more details on the fun events we have planned. This is also a great opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas, and questions or concerns you may have.

Thanks for all who replied to our recent member survey. It was helpful and affirming that the efforts the board has deemed as most important is consistent with what our members shared. Our goals are aligned and the board will continue to prioritize our efforts in sync with our members feedback. There is more detail about the survey results in the Engagement and Finance article in this newsletter.

Be sure to check out our updated website www.bigstarlake.com for the most current information regarding Water Quality and Invasive Aquatic Vegetation Analysis, Newly passed SAD (Special Assessment District) to treat Aquatic Weeds, Nuisance Goose Initiative and the new boating legislation recently introduced in the Michigan State Senate, SB 812. This bill aims to define and regulate "wake boats" as well as protect shorelines and bottomlands from damage caused by enhanced boat wakes. More details can be found in the Environmental article in this newsletter.

The BSLA board is committed to our mission. It requires dedication, time and effort by all board members and leadership to fulfill this mission. We are continually seeking board members who are willing to serve as directors to ensure the BSLA remains strong and vibrant for years to come. If any member is interested in serving on the BSLA Board of directors, or alternatively on a committee please let a board member know. We have 3 committees: the Environmental Committee chaired by Brian Beeg, the Engagement and Finance Committee chaired by Kris White, and the Activities Committee chaired by Lew Gorbach. You do not need to be a board member to participate in these committees.

We continue to work closely with our township officials as well as the sheriff, fire and rescue and our lake management experts regarding water quality and mitigating risks. These relationships are critical and we thank all these officials and experts for their partnership.

Looking forward to a great summer on the water! We also look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Meeting!

Co-Presidents
Lew Gorbach/Tom Seeley



Pictured: L to R: Tom Seeley, Fire Chief Doug Wolgamott, Lew Gorbach. Donation presentation from BSLA.



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For More information and Event Updates check out our Website
www.bigstarlake.com

BIG STAR LAKE ASSOCIATION

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2026 BSLA Schedule of Events

Mark your calendars for all of your favorite BSLA events for Summer 2026!

Annual Meeting:	5-23-26	9:30am	Chapel
Spring Road Clean Up	5-16-26	to	5-23-26
Fishing Contest:	5-24-26	Through	9-07-26
Fire Works:	7-3-26	Rain Date	7-11-26
Poker Run:	8-08-26	Rain Date	8-15-26
Labor Day Road Run:	9-05-26		
Fall Road Clean Up:	9-19-26	to	9-26-26

Please go to our website www.bigstarlake.com for all the details and sign-up forms for the latest on our season long events.

For the Spring and Fall Road Clean Up, pick up your orange trash bags and reflective safety vest at Mr. Bibs. A big thank you to Mr. Bibs for helping us out with this important event!

Greetings from the Engagement and Finance Committee!

The purpose of this BSLA committee is to coordinate, plan and execute efforts around membership, benefactors, business sponsors and finance. Engagement and Finance Committee include: Kris White (board VP and committee chair), Bob Tiggelman (board member), Jeff Fraser (board secretary), Gary Bissonette (board treasurer), Bruce Heys (BSLA member), Kathleen Feeney (BSLA member). We wanted to update you on some important Engagement and Finance Committee activities and on the member survey.

Member Survey

Let's start with the member survey, by beginning with a big thank you to those that took time to complete it. 82 members replied which was a great sampling of our members. The information shared was of great value and will help inform the BSLA Board as we make plans for the 2026 year!

We asked our members to please select what they see as the top 5 most important BSLA activities/efforts. Below is a summary of responses by percentage of respondents.

1. Water quality – 96%
2. Fostering strong relationships with township/county, emergency services- 76%
3. Educating members on efforts to protect BSL (boating rules, wake surfing impacts, septic care, etc.) - 63%
4. Annual Fireworks Show - 55%
5. Goose mitigation efforts - 44%
6. Efforts to increase membership - 42%

From there the remaining priorities identified are:

7. DNR Fingerling Program Support – 25%
8. Spring/Fall Road Clean up – 15%
9. Road Run -7%
10. Fishing Contest- 5%
11. Efforts to increase Business Sponsors- 4%
12. Efforts to increase Benefactors- 4%
13. Poker Run- 2%

We wanted to share this data with everyone, acknowledging that it requires a bit of explanation and discussion as to what the “take aways” are. We look forward to reviewing the results and answering any questions at the Annual Meeting on May 23rd.



Membership

It is that time of the year when we update our membership dues for 2026! We have decided as a board to maintain our annual membership dues at \$50. Included in this newsletter is an envelope that you can submit your dues in, or better yet, use our online member portal. You can sign in or visit our website at www.bigstarlake.com to access your member account. If you do not yet have an account, it is easy to set one up on the website- just follow the "Join Now" button on the home page or under the Membership tab.

As you know we believe every single property owner should be a BSLA member. The BSLA mission and efforts of the association serve every single property owner. Please help us get the word out! For all of you who are members – thank you! Without your continued support- the BSLA would not exist. We will not list the multitude of reasons why we believe every single owner should be a member- as the contents of this newsletter provide testimony to the energy, effort and passion that goes into protecting this beautiful lake, the surrounding watershed and to provide some activities that build community and create memories for all of us who enjoy Big Star Lake.

We do, however, have work to do. Current membership represents approximately 80% of lakefront property owners, but only about 46% of all eligible members (those with property within the blacktop around the lake). Our goal is to have 100% of eligible members, be BSLA members.

Two Key strategies to increase membership include:

1. A **direct mailing** was recently sent to all eligible BSLA members who are not currently members, with a personal invite to join the BSLA. We hope that this direct reach out to all non-members, listing the benefits or the "why" membership is important, inspires those who are not members, to join us!
2. Re-establish an **Area Representative Program**. Some of you may remember a similar effort in the past. This effort is being brought back in a slightly different form. Our goal is to have 1-2 representatives from each area of the Lake- Areas A through H, that serves to enhance communication and connection between members of the BSLA and the board. This is not a board director role, but a chance to volunteer to help support membership efforts- so all are welcome to become an Area Rep!

Program Goals:

1. Increase membership in the BSLA
2. Establish a communication/feedback loop between Area Reps, BSLA members and the board.

There will be much more information regarding this as we establish the area representatives. We are excited about the possibility this depth of resource and connection will bring to the BSLA and our members. For the immediate future, if you are interested in volunteering to serve as an area representative or learn more about this effort, please contact Bruce Heys at bruce@heysbuilders.com or Kathleen Feeney at lfeeney@comcast.net.

Business Sponsors

As you know, many businesses support the BSLA efforts through generous annual donations. Without their support, many of our efforts would not be possible. We would ask all our members to please take the time to familiarize yourselves with our Business Sponsors listed on our website at www.bigstarlake.com. If you need services, please consider these generous business partners, and thank them for their support!

Benefactors

There are so many generous members in our midst. The BSLA Board strives to keep membership dues low, so that membership isn't a barrier due to cost. However, as you all know, expenses continue to rise. In some areas such as our annual fireworks show, costs have dramatically increased.

We are incredibly thankful for those members who can give above and beyond the \$50 annual dues. Last year BSLA members donated more than \$3000. We identify these BSLA members as Benefactors. These individuals are identified and acknowledged on our website under the "**Donate**" button on the home page. Their names will also appear on our T-shirts for the Annual Road Run. We invite anyone to join our Benefactor Society who can give beyond the \$50 dues to support the efforts and programs of the BSLA. We thank you for your consideration.

Staying Connected

One final note about how we can best stay connected as an association and members with the board. We strive to continue to leverage electronic means to get information out more quickly with shorter feedback cycles. We would ask that you keep your information updated in your member portal, so you do not miss critical information and updates. If you have not yet signed up via the website, please do so. In addition, we strive to keep the website up to date and should be your "go to" for information regarding the BSLA. Again, the website is www.bigstarlake.com. We do monitor the BSLA email several times a week. Please feel to reach out via email us at bstarlake@gmail.com.

We will have a table set up at the Annual Meeting beginning at 9:00am and will be available to talk with anyone interested in volunteering to be an Area Rep or any other membership questions.



Again, thank you for your membership and support!
We look forward to seeing you at the
Annual Meeting May 23, 2026, at 9:30am at the Chapel.

Environmental Committee

The Environmental Committee is dedicated to preserving and safeguarding the water quality and health of Big Star Lake. We also provide educational information and helpful tips to the Big Star Lake community about being good stewards of the lake. To support our initiatives, we've partnered with a variety of organizations (e.g. Michigan DNR, USDA – Wildlife Services, Lake Township, Restorative Lake Sciences, Mason County Walleye Association, and other 3rd party service providers). Environmental Committee members include: Brian Beeg (board member and committee chair), Tom Seeley (board Co-President) and Bob Tiggelman (board member). Below are some key updates and volunteer opportunities that we wanted to share with you.

Big Star Lake – Low Water Levels

In 2025, a significant number of Michigan lakes were impacted by a severe drought, including Big Star Lake. As a result, Big Star Lake was challenged with declining water levels throughout the year. With low water levels, many lakeshore residents experienced black sludge washing up on their beaches from both wake surfing and boats with large motors running in the shallow water near shore.

As of mid-March in 2026, Baldwin received about 82 inches of snow, which is on the higher-end of the seasonal average range (71 to 83 inches) of snowfall. Hopefully, precipitation levels will continue to trend upward this Spring and Summer.

Water Quality

Last Summer, Restorative Lake Sciences (RLS) conducted Big Star Lake's annual water quality testing (e.g. dissolved oxygen, water clarity, nitrogen, phosphorus, alkalinity, pH, conductivity and chlorophyll-a/algal species composition). In addition, RLS also tested for E. coli and the black sludge that many lakeshore residents experienced on their beaches. Below is a summary of the testing results:

- **Overall:** Water quality in Big Star Lake remains excellent. Big Star Lake is ranked in the top 15% of developed lakes of similar size in Michigan. Water clarity is high allowing light penetration to deeper water that helps support abundant aquatic plant growth throughout many areas of the lake. The other measured water quality parameters indicate a well-balanced aquatic ecosystem with ideal pH and conductivity.
- **E. coli:** Levels are well below detection, indicating safe water quality.
- **Black Sludge:** This is a non-toxic, organic material.

For all the details, you can find Restorative Lake Science's annual report (2025 Aquatic Vegetation, Water Quality, and 2026 Management Recommendations) on the BSLA website www.bigstarlake.com.

Treatment of Invasive Aquatic Vegetation - Special Assessment District (SAD)

On February 26, 2026, Lake Township unanimously approved the SAD to fund the treatment of invasive aquatic vegetation in Big Star Lake. The SAD is scheduled to run for the next 10 years and will appear in this year's Summer taxes. With years of lake management (whole lake scans, surveys and treatment) we've successfully minimized the impacts and treatment costs to eliminate Big Star Lake's invasive aquatic vegetation (e.g. Eurasian Watermilfoil - EWM). From Restorative Lake Science's 2025 annual report, we have less than one percent of EWM in Big Star Lake, which allows for spot treatment. Thanks to this year's SAD funding, we'll continue to keep our invasive aquatic vegetation under control. Getting an approved SAD has been a huge and challenging project. For everyone that's been involved, THANK YOU for all your efforts and support!

Proposed Wake Boat Surfing Legislation (SB 812)

Michigan Senate Bill 812, introduced by Senator Rosemary Bayer on February 26, 2026, is a piece of legislation aimed at regulating the use of "wake boats" on Michigan's inland lakes. The bill is a response to growing concerns from shoreline property owners and environmental groups regarding erosion, damage to docks, and the stirring up of lakebed sediments. Currently, this bill has a status of introduced/pending.

If passed, the bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to establish the following rules for wake boats:

- **The 500-Foot Rule:** Boats operating in "wake sport mode" (using ballast tanks or other equipment to enhance waves) must stay at least **500 feet** away from shorelines, docks, and moored vessels.
- **Depth Requirement:** Wake-enhancing equipment cannot be engaged in water that is less than **20 feet deep**.
- **Definitions:** The bill formally defines "wake boat," "wake-enhancing equipment," and "wake sport mode" to provide clear legal categories for enforcement.
- **Speed Limits:** It also addresses general vessel speed, proposing a maximum speed limit of **55 mph** in areas where no specific limit is posted, while allowing for temporary emergency speed restrictions.

Many association members have expressed concern over the impacts of wake boat surfing on Big Star Lake, especially during low water levels. To act, we would encourage you to contact your State Senator and let them know you support more protection for Michigan's inland lakes. Helpful links below:

- **Senate Bill 812**
 - <https://legislature.mi.gov/documents/2025-2026/billintroduced/Senate/htm/2026-SIB-0812.htm>
- **Find your State Senator's contact information**
 - <https://senate.michigan.gov/senators/all-senators>



Nuisance Geese Management

In Spring of 2025, we successfully implemented the Nuisance Geese Management (NGM) program for "resident" geese. Thanks to our partnerships with the Michigan DNR, USDA – Wildlife Services and Lake Township, we'll continue this program in 2026.

Volunteer Opportunities

Are you interested in volunteering to support the Big Star Lake community? If so, we have a couple of great opportunities for you to get involved! Thanks in advance for considering/volunteering!

- **Spring/Fall Road Clean Up** - The scheduled dates are May 16th-23rd and September 19th-26th. This year, we're modifying how areas will be collected to make things a little more consistent. We recommend using the **BSLA website, Events** menu option to sign-up. Or, if you'd prefer, you can contact Bob Tiggelman (bobtiggelman@yahoo.com) directly. Once signed-up, you'll be contacted by Bob with all the details.
- **Loon Ranger** - The Michigan Loonwatch program covers 47 counties and monitors 300 lakes in Michigan to provide registry, management and protection of the Common Loon. To assist in this program for Big Star Lake; Michigan Loon Preservation Association is looking for a volunteer to become a Loon Ranger to help protect the loons and their habitat. To learn more about this opportunity and who to contact, please see the **BSLA website, Events** menu option.

Activities Committee

The purpose of the Activities committee is to coordinate, plan and execute efforts around all of the fun events that we have come to enjoy on and around Big Star Lake. Activities Committee include: Lew Gorbach (board co-president and committee chair), Gary Bissonette (board treasurer), Mike VanDyken (board member) and Judy Alpenhaar (BSLA member). Following is the list of events and dates as they are planned for 2026.

Fireworks

Our annual fireworks show is set for Friday July 3, 2026 with a rain date of Saturday July 11, 2026. We are still looking for sponsors for this years show. Please reach out to any of the committee members should you be interested in sponsoring the fireworks. Any business that would choose to participate in sponsorship would gain promotional and preferred signage at all of the other BSLA events throughout the year.

Road Run

The annual road run will take place Saturday September 5, 2026. Both 5K and 15K will begin at the Lake Township Hall. The 15K will start at 8:30am with the 5K and kids race to follow. Day of race registration is available starting at 7:15 but in order to be ensured a race t shirt please consider registering on our web site or pick up a registration form at Mr. Bibs. Fees for members will be \$25 and \$30 for non-members. There is a route update for this year. Both 5K and 15K will go down Birchwood to avoid blind spots near the boat launch.

Poker Run

The 2026 Poker Run will take place Saturday August 8, 2026. Boats will proceed around the lake, starting at 1p.m., using your cottage as a starting point, until you have made 5 stops. Stops will be identified by orange construction cones at the end of the dock. Participants will draw a card at each stop and the host will mark a tally sheet. No duplicate cards can be used, so participants must draw an additional card if identical card is drawn. All participants will meet up at Tall Oaks Camp at 4:30 to determine/announce winners and 50/50 drawing.

Registration will take place at the BSLA meeting on Saturday, 23, and in front of Mr. Bibs the mornings of 7-25/7-26 and 8-1/8-2 from 9:00 to 11:00. We will also be selling 50/50 raffle tickets those mornings.

Please contact Mike VanDyken at firefighter1828@yahoo.com if you are unable to sign up at these times and would like to participate, or if you have any questions.

Here's where we need your help! We are looking for people to host stops at their dock.

Fishing Contest

The start of the 2026 annual Big Star Lake fishing contest for association members is just around the corner. The contest runs from opening day of Bass fishing on Saturday, May 23 and closes on Labor Day, Monday, September 7. Members of all ages and experience levels are welcome to participate. Fill out the entry form located on our webpage at www.bigstarlake.com.

Participants are expected to comply with all Michigan DNR rules and regulations regarding fishing licenses, minimum/maximum daily catch count, and open season for each species. We encourage catch and release practices especially for frogs and turtles.

Winners of the 2025 Big Star Lake fishing contest should pick up their trophies on Saturday, May 23 at the Big Star Lake Chapel during our annual meeting.



Please keep in mind that Michigan has set aside June 13-14, 2026 as a free weekend to fish in Michigan. All fishing licenses will be waived for two days. Residents and out-of-state visitors may enjoy fishing on both inland and Great Lakes waters for all species of fish. All fishing regulations still apply.

Government Report

We are saddened by the passing of Lake Township Clerk, Bob Reidel. Bob was a loving husband, father, grandfather and an active community member. Bob served in the Vietnam war, where he served in the 9th Infantry Division. He was very proud of his service to his country. Bob was a member of the Lake Forest, IL Police Department for 32 years until his retirement as commander in 2001. He built a home on Lake Cecilia in 2002 and thoroughly enjoyed his retirement. Bob had served as our Township Clerk since 2008 until his passing this past February. Bob will be dearly missed.

Amy Rademaker, Lake Township Land Use Administrator, will assume the additional roll of Township Clerk, until this Fall when a new Township Clerk can be elected. Thank you Amy for taking on this added responsibility.

In our continued efforts to foster a strong relationship with township/county, emergency services, we have invited the following local officials to our annual meeting. Please come and listen to our local officials as they provide a better understanding into all the services they provide to our community.

DNR – Josiah Killingbeck

Marine Sargent – Bob Meyers

Lake Township Fire Chief – Doug Walgomat

Restorative Lake Services – Mike Solomon

Government – Bob Mateja

Lake Township Zoning Administrator – Amy Rademaker

Lake Township Fire & Rescue: Lake Township Fire & Rescue participated in a variety of ice rescue training activities over the winter, hosting the annual ice rescue with neighboring Carr Fire Department. This allows neighboring townships to share tactics and build meaningful communication when faced with a real emergency. Having the ability to work together when an emergency strikes, is key to providing the best service for our community. A big THANK YOU to all of the brave men and women who risk their lives to make all of us safe!

Fire and Rescue participated in 3 wild fires this past year (along with 208 calls for service). In their efforts to stay on top of current rescue technology, the Lake Township Fire & Rescue is in the process of acquiring a drone to assist in aerial reconnaissance and monitoring, search and rescue operations and fire scene assessment. Once an individual has gone through the required training, Fire & Rescue will be able to put this valuable tool into use. They have also added several hundreds of dollars in additional rescue equipment to make their jobs more efficient.

Lake County Road Commission: Star Lake Road continues to be a topic of conversation from property owners around the lake. Like most other government agencies, budget constraints continue to be a tough battle when it comes to improvements to our roads. Star Lake Road is scheduled to have repairs done to the road, similar to last year.

76th Street Railroad tracks. While last year's improvements are much better than before, there is conversation around lengthening the approach ramp up to the tracks in an effort to make crossing the tracks even better and leveling off sloped sides of the road. This too is subject to budget constraints.

The cell tower is up and operating well. Individuals with carriers other than Verizon are encouraged to contact their providers to be added to the tower. Carr IQ Fiber Internet is also now available around the lake with free installation. This is a great opportunity to upgrade your internet at an affordable price, with a local provider.

Marine Patrol: Marine Officer Sgt. Bob Meyers is excited to report that all of his guys are coming back this season. This allows for less time hiring, training and getting his guys up to speed, and more time focused on patrolling the water ways. The main focus for this season will be similar to years past, making sure everyone has life jackets or personal flotation device on board for everyone.

The cost of fuel and repairs continue to increase and will be a challenge this year. Last year there was a concern at the start of the season of funding being available for patrol. That was saved at the last minute by the County stepping up with the necessary funds to cover the cost of patrolling. This year will not be an issue as funding through the Coast Guard from a Federal Grant has been made available to cover this expense.

The Marine Patrol has a new boat going into service this year. It is a smaller, one man boat that will allow for easier access to the lake and allow for fewer hours on their larger, older boat in order to make it last longer. Marine Patrol plans to be on the water by Memorial Day, however that can change if we come into better weather earlier.

Thank you once again to all of our local officials! We appreciate what you do for us!





Big Star Lake Association
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Big Star Lake Association Sponsorship Opportunity 2026

GOLD LEVEL SPONSOR - \$300	SILVER LEVEL SPONSOR - \$200	BRONZE LEVEL SPONSOR - \$100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive Spring & Fall BSLA newsletters Receive BSLA associate membership sign Company logo published in Fall newsletter Company name & logo displayed on BSLA website home page sponsor ribbon Company listed in Member Planet distribution portal for BSLA members Company name displayed at annual BSLA Labor Day weekend road run Company name displayed at BSLA poker run awards ceremony Company name posted on BSLA sign on 76th Street for one week during the summer Company name & logo printed on annual BSLA Labor Day road run t-shirt Two complimentary road run t-shirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company name & logo displayed on BSLA website home page sponsor ribbon Company name displayed at BSLA summer concert Company name displayed at annual BSLA Labor Day weekend road run Company name & logo printed on annual BSLA Labor Day road run t-shirt Two complimentary road run t-shirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company name & logo displayed on BSLA website home page sponsor ribbon Company name & logo printed on BSLA annual Labor Day road run t-shirt One complimentary road run t-shirt

Please make checks payable to **Big Star Lake Association** and mail to: Jeff Fraser, BSLA, 5689 Michigan Street, NE Ada, Michigan 49301. For questions, please contact Jeff at (616) 481-0477 or fraserj@millerjohnson.com.

