

A Short History of DLPOA
Updated February, 2023 (in italics)

All of this material was found in the accumulated newsletters of DLPOA, which are (mostly) on our web site.

DLPOA was started on October 4th, 1974. The purpose of the organization, as stated, by W A (Bill) Twitchell, the newly elected president, is "to band together to protect the Lake and. with the strength of group deliberation and. commitment adequately field the community problems involved." The issues of that time were: Ecological impact on the Lake by the proposed Mountain Shadows development, particularly the location of open sewer lagoons in the main north-west drainage basins into Deer Lake. Shoreline Management, PUD Water and. Sewer project, the 'Diamond Lake' Bill, solid waste disposal, roads and water safety are also on the list of group concerns. The first entry into the treasury was \$471 by 17 Deer Lake property owners to get things started. 42 more owners later ponied up another \$1100. These 59 property owners were designated Charter Members, and they all got a gold card.

The Fall 1974 newsletter has an interesting history of Deer Lake up till that time. And, people were griping about their property taxes then.

1. Southwood Shores road

Spring 1978 started the process for a better Southwood Shores Road, another process that would take almost 20 years. The Spring 1990 newsletter predicted a paved road around the whole lake by 2000....

In 1992, the county published a list of road project priorities. Southwood Shores was like 37th on the list. By Spring of 1993, the issue of Southwood Shores Road started to make a lot of noise. At that time, the county was still discussing the idea of paving the road (long since abandoned) and putting guardrails on the road. This latter they would do if DLPOA bought the guardrails. Then the county sold the guardrails that they were going sell us. So, they asked us for \$6K for new ones. By spring of 1994, this was approved, with the county taking on any liability. This \$6K is probably the only thing that got this project moving at all. In October 1994 the state awarded \$1.9M for this project. It was completed in May 1995. But the grants for paving the road were turned down by Fall of 1996. Over time, proposals were made for DLPOA to oil the 10 miles of gravel roads on our lake, but that got turned down also.

In 2012 the DLPOA board started lobbying the Stevens County Commissioners to pave or oil Southwood Shores Road. Nothing came of that, until 2017, when a local resident got tired of breathing dust and took it on himself to get something done. Much to everybody's surprise, something actually happened. The county brought in 3 inches (1000 yards) of gravel (\$87K), and that person contracted with some company to somehow seal the road afterwards (\$16K). He took it on himself to guarantee payment of the sealing, and asked for donations. And probably got stiffed to the tune of \$6K. 2023 county acting on Southwood shores chip seal. In process.

2. North Deer Lake Road

By 1980, the sheriff and fire guys were complaining about the cars parked on the North Deer

Lake

Road area. As they do still today.

3. Fish and fishing (*and wildlife*)

And what kinds of fish would be stocked was then, and is now, a concern. It appears that DLPOA started its own fish hatchery at that time. This hatchery was still in operation in 1991. And the state continued to put fish into the lake. By 1991, the state fish was getting less, and our hatchery was having power problems, vandalism problems, and somebody had to be there all winter long. So, the idea of getting fish pens came up, where volunteers would put out these pens, with automated feeders, and you would only have to fill the feeders once a week or so. Apparently, we could get tiny fish a lot easier than big catchable fish. This went into operation in the Fall of 1991 and exists to this day. By 1994 a second pen was in operation. *Both Rainbow and Brook trout have been raised.*

By 1984, a study by EWU was proposed to figure out just what is in the lake, and what is best for the lake. DLPOA would be on the hook for \$4K of that. The 1985 fish study done by EWU was discussed in the August 1988 newsletter. The actual report was 180 pages long. It showed that “the rate of eutrophication of Deer Lake appears to be accelerating in a geometric pattern as indicated by: (1) increased nutrient (orthophosphate) levels which now exceed the critical level for producing nuisance algal blooms;(2) increased phytoplankton biovolume and a shift in phytoplankton composition to blue-green algae; (3) a 20% decrease in water transparency from 1971 to 1985; (4) a geometric increase in the rate of hypolimnetic oxygen depletion between 1971 and 1985; and (5) replacement of cladocerans by an increased abundance of rotifers.” What that all seemed to mean is, the fish don’t like what is happening. And of course, the solution to all this is a lake wide Sewer. In 2009, the question came up, do we want a sport fishing lake (eg macks) or a eat fishing lake (eg rainbows). The state really wants an answer to that question so that they can decide what kinds of fish to stock in our lake.

In 2012, a series of outings for disabled vets was started. Residents with pontoon boats are asked to show up a few times during the summer, and a bunch of vets are trucked in, along with attendants, to go fishing, or at least to be out in the lake.

In the last few years, critters other than deer (and bears and cougars) have shown up. Beavers have been around for a decade at least, although the Lands Council has facilities to trap and relocate them. In the last couple of years, otters have shown up. Especially around the fish pens. And when the fish are not released early enough for their enjoyment, they have learned how to chomp through the netting to create their own buffet. The fish pen now has a (hopefully) otter proof surround to prevent this from happening again.

2023; Working with fish and wildlife to get larger fish from hatchery to supplement our fish pen release. Trying to get the fish per acre up to a sustainable level.

4. Transfer Station

People started a process to get a refuse dump in the area. It finally opened in 1980. A replacement building north of the original with scales built. When? Mid 90’s ?

In 2016, a couple of free Chipper days got started. Stevens Count brings in a tree grinder, and

you can bring in all the tree parts that you want to get rid of.

5. Shoreline Management Act, and Growth Management Act

In 1978, the Shoreline Management Act was starting to get notice. At that time, you could own the land under the water in front of your place. That was going to be prohibited in the future, and this would be an issue for some years. By 1983, that possibility was gone.

In Spring 1991, the first indication that Stevens County would finally adopt a Shoreline Management Plan, required by the state back in 1971. Stevens was the last county in the state to do this, and the DLPOA board was not too happy about this Plan, with its 200 ft. setbacks and all. By Fall of 1992, there was a huge fight between the county planning department (bureaucrats) and the Advisory Committee (e.g., citizens). The citizens said to take the plan and shove it. The county took it and passed it. DLPOA still grumped about it, mostly over the idea of who would approve variances to the Plan, doofuses on the West Side or somebody local. It appears that DLPOA won this battle. But there were still battles going on in Spring of 1996. 2022: Plan was reviewed and updated to current levels the state requires.

In 2005, work started on a Deer Lake Subarea Plan, something required by the Growth Management Act, starting even more battles.

6. Firewood

Boise Cascade was starting to close its roads to the public, due to vandalism, and people illegally cutting firewood. Something that continues today with the current owners. And, they were going to start a major logging operation. There was a concern that some property owner's property gave Boise the right to log their property. This was later denied by Boise. By 1982, Boise was letting DLPOA members cut downed wood for firewood. The successor to Boise, Forest Capital, sometimes lets DLPOA members continue to get wood. This was discontinued with some new owners and logging companies making use of all the scrub trees left from logging.

7. Boating

Boat Ordinances started to appear. One summer a speedboat ran over a small fishing boat, causing injuries, and another speedboat capsized a fishing boat, drowning the fisherman. There had been a Sheriff's boat on the lake the previous year, and DLPOA asked for a full time boat this year. In 1983, DLPOA purchased a boat for the Sheriff's department. It was at first manned by a Sheriff's deputy, then later by retired policemen, but eventually the County said they did not want to support this anymore. It was sold in 2002.

In 2012, Knight EZ Dock donated a dock for the public access area, which has been a huge help launching and retrieving boats at the public boat launch. This made handicapped access much better.

The Sheriff and DLPOA put in some warning buoys at the Sunrise Point sand bar. There had been (and continue in 2012 to be) a lot of damage to props on this thing. (This author can so testify...) it continues to this day when the water is low.

For a long time, people created their own buoys out of white barrels, gallon jugs, whatever.

*These are illegal and the Sheriff has been removing them. For about a C note+, you can buy proper buoys. It is legal to put them up to 100 ft out from the shore, and if they are there, boaters are supposed to slow down to no wake speed for 100 ft out from them. This does **not** exclude wake boats...*

8. Fire Department

DLPOA was actively involved in providing funds for the Loon Lake fire department to get equipment that their budget did not allow for. As we still do today.

By 1981, the Deer Lake fire house was starting to get equipped, at first with a Jeep. Fire extinguishers were passed out to year around home owners. These would be maintained by the fire department. The first annual pancake feed to provide funds for the fire station started in July 1982. In 1988 the Fire Station was expanded.

In 2001, a proposal was made to buy a fireboat for \$175K. It did not happen.

In 2012 Cold Water Rescue equipment was purchased for the fire house. This is for fishing people and maybe animals out of the lake in the winter time. This was funded at least in part by the pancake feeds.

That same year a boy scout selected as his eagle project the installation of fire danger signs. These are located both on North Deer Lake Road, and East Deer Lake Road.

In 2013 Medstar (helicopter ambulance) agreed to offer DLPOA members a discount. We are kind of far away from a hospital, and this service could be very useful in an emergency. This discount no longer available as DLPOA is no longer involved. But supports the service. There is a yearly fee. Program discontinued. Individuals can buy plans. Lifeflight.

9. Sheriff and local Ordinances

By 1982, people were starting to talk about shooting restrictions on the lake. Nothing happened. The subject came up again in 2000, and in 2010. Still nothing has happened. Since Deer Lake is not an incorporated city, shooting restrictions don't apply.

There was very high water in the 1996-1997 timeframe. (3 feet over full) During that time an emergency no wake ordinance got passed, something that we in 2012 are trying to make permanent. Part of the reason for the flooding was that the drainage canal near the public access area got plugged up over the years. DLPOA and PUD together put together a project to clear this canal. It has worked well these last 15 years. The culvert is not big enough to handle exceptionally high flooding. This needs to be addressed again with the county.

DLPOA tried to work with the county commissioners starting in 2012 to provide a way, when the water is very high, to implement a lake wide no wake ordinance. At first there seemed to be agreement, then some legal junk got in the way, and eventually the Commissioners bagged it. Their feeling is, like earlier, an emergency no wake temporary ordinance could be created, but DLPOA feels that this process will take so long that the water will be at normal levels before anything happens.

10. Zoning

Also, DLPOA was getting involved in Zoning specifically for the lake. By 1989, DLPOA thought that they were one step away from getting the County Commissioners to approve the zoning ordinance. By 1991, the Commissioners approved a Plan for this ordinance. By 1993, everything got scrapped and they started over. It appears that the county approved some sort of zoning ordinance in September of 1993, but it really only applies to new construction.

11. Sewer

The Summer 1975 newsletter is the first instance of proposing a sewer system for Deer Lake, a process that would take almost 20 years. They started out with, of course, a Study. This engineer's report was presented in the Summer of 1976. Fees were to be about \$75/year.

By Summer 1978, enough favorable petitions were received on the sewer issue so that the PUD could start to process to get funding. In December, the Stevens County Public Utility District Commissioners denied the request, made to them through petition of the property owners of the lake, to form a sewer district, mostly because of the cost.

Spring 1979 brought forth the idea of a Municipal Sewer District, bypassing the county. There would be an assessment on each property, of course. The whole idea got dropped by Summer.

Serious sewer discussions resumed in May 1983. By this time, the Loon Lake sewer system was progressing. By June of 1984, PUD had acquired an existing sewer system in Wanakiwin. DLPOA members started meeting with PUD about restarting a lake wide sewer system. The cost was still an issue. By early 1985, some costs were nailed down (\$5K per lot to hook up, \$6M for the system, \$10/month to run it). By 1986, a Facility plan was submitted to DOE, but they rejected it because rules had changed. But they were willing to help us wordsmith it to be acceptable. In 1988 the DLPOA board was doing another full court press to get this done

In 1988 the PUD accepted the petitions for a sewer and put it on a schedule. A few months later, though, snags started to show up. First, funding sources that they expected to have access to dried up. Second, not everybody was happy about a sewer, or having to pay for it, so an effort was being made by a group to derail the process. In August, 1989, this group petitioned the county to form a City of Deer Lake. Such a city would of course be able to overrule the PUD about putting in a sewer. The DLPOA board got pretty ticked off, and the Fall 1989 newsletter expressed their unhappiness ☹ with this development. By summer of 1990, the petition for a city was tossed out for not having enough signatures. So, the sewer work progressed on.

The previous year, it looked like the home owners would have to find close to \$5M, because all the grants had dried up. By summer of 1990, they had found a \$1.7M grant, a couple of other grants of about \$0.5M and got a 6% \$1.4M loan from one source, and a 1% \$1.3M loan from someplace else. At the same time, somebody had the idea to include a water system for those areas that did not have one, at the same time that the roads were being all torn up for the sewer, and they got a 40% grant for that cost. Construction started at Haney's earlier in the year. They in fact used the frozen over lake to somehow put the pipe across the narrows that winter. The pipeline to the Loon Lake treatment site was installed. By Fall of 1992, most of the system was

complete.

One of the outgrowths of the sewer effort was that the roads got improved, and in some cases repaved. Some roads were widened. Another outgrowth was the addition of fire hydrants – the count went from 3 to 36. A third outgrowth was that the fishing started to change for the worse, possibly because all the nutrients that used to go into the lake, stopped. The hope was that the lake would balance itself out in a few years. (2023: not the case.) The larger population of predatory fish is causing the imbalance.

12. Dock Demo Day

The Dock Demo Day started in 1984 to get rid of derelict docks on the lake. It was from this wood that the Deer Lake signs were created at the two entrances to our lake.

In 2001 these signs were repainted, and one of the logs got replaced. They were again redone, and the North sign moved, in 2011. In 2021 both entrance signs were replaced with new ones.

By 2013, with the advent of plastic docks that seem to survive the frozen lake better than wood ones, the number of docks were drastically reduced, so it was decided to do this only every other year unless there appeared to be a real need.

13. DLPOA properties

The 22-acre property in the narrows was purchased December 20, 1986, for \$18,500 plus closing costs, plus another \$10k for improvements. This was one of the big issues in the sewer debate – what about all the cow poop from the narrows? By Spring 2000, the ranch above that property was purchased by Soil Conservation then sold to Fish & Game. A year later, a vote of the membership turned down the proposal to sell the DLPOA property, thus leaving DLPOA with the property taxes and insurance costs.

In 2005, we acquired a small piece of property on North Deer Lake Rd. The plan was to use it as a community center. There was discussion on this for the next couple of years, but the cost was too much. Finally, in 2012, it was decided to sell it *for \$6,200*.

14. Milfoil and water quality

By 1982, DLPOA was continuing its concern about water quality. The Board voted \$1000 to test the water in the lake. Algae started showing up. It was determined later that the cattle being fattened up in the wetlands north of the lake was washing nutrients into it. The property was eventually sold to fish and wildlife which made it a conservancy to protect the lake water quality. Water quality testing is done about every 5 years to ensure our water quality is maintained or improved. Deer Lake water is some of the best in eastern Washington.

Eurasian Milfoil – this was first mentioned in the Spring 1997 newsletter, when Loon Lake discovered it. Every newsletter since then have had stories about it, watching for it, what it can do to your lake, and did do to Loon Lake. The idea of a Lake Management District was first proposed in the Summer 2001 newsletter. It was finally discovered in our lake in 2007, which means it had been there probably a few years earlier but just never identified. We got a grant of

\$50K from the Department of Ecology to control it for the next three years, and then, after much discussion, a LMD was formed to fund the ongoing situation for the next five years. *This LMD was renewed for another five years when the first semi-decade was up. It was renewed again in 2021 for another 5 years. Since there is no way to eradicate Eurasian Milfoil, this attempt to control the weed will have to continue forever.*

And now we have to worry about Zebra Mussels, which are heading our way. Both Idaho and Washington have set up boat inspection stations on major border highways in an attempt to keep it out of our waterways.

15. Road Cleanup

The semiannual Road Cleanups were officially started in 1990, although a group had been doing that in previous years. It continues today with many volunteers under the guidance of DLPOA.

16. Development

In 2007, the big concern was that some guy was going to develop the hillsides with dozens of McMansions. That ended up never happening, and the guy went broke. The limiting factor to more development is the sewer capacity.

17. Events

In the fall of 2000, it was first proposed to have a boat parade on the 4th of July, and maybe professional fireworks. This first happened in 2001. That all went so well that a proposal for a kiddie parade for 2002 was made. (Now called a “community parade”) *All of this continues to occur every year. It is followed by a community picnic sponsored by DLPOA.*

In 2012, now that there are some ladies either on the board or at least “advising” husbands that are on the board, a dance was started at Deer Lake Resort. This has expanded into a New Year’s Eve festivity, and maybe even more dances.

In 2009 a Pig Out at Pinelow bbq potluck started to have some way to get together in August.

18. Web Site and DLPOA issues

Also in 2001, our web site was started under the name www.dlpoa.com. (Dlpoa.org was already taken.) *A Facebook page was started in 2012. A Deer Lake Neighborhood web site, run by a commercial company, got started the next year. This is open only to members of DLPOA, so you should not get spammed by any outside groups. The web site was totally revamped in 2017 to make it more modern and interesting, with more graphics and security. The website (dlpoa.com) is run by the DLPOA board now.*

Dues were \$12/year from the beginning, but in the Fall of 2001 the dues were raised to \$15.00. A few years later, because of D&O insurance, they were raised again to \$20.00.

Starting in 2010, we are including an activities calendar with the last newsletter of the year. Very successful with at least 50 advertisers supporting the effort.

In 2011, DLPOA started selling apparel with DLPOA logos on them. This had been done briefly

many years earlier, like in the early 90's. But this time we have a much larger selection of clothing and styles.

In 2013 a Big Bucks Club (a play on Deer Lake's name) was started to give swag to members who would give DLPOA at least \$100. (Dues are still only \$20, but that counts.)

In 2018, the Annual Meeting was moved from June to August. June had graduations, weddings, and all kinds of competing things going on that prevented people from showing up. It is hoped that August will find people already at the lake and willing to attend.

In 2019 covid put a hold on some activities. We started back up full time in 2022.