

November 2019

WOAHINK LAKE ASSOCIATION



The Woahink Lake Association was established in 1996 to promote the understanding, protection, and thoughtful management of Woahink Lake, its watershed, and its ecosystem.

CONTENTS

**Winter Meeting
Theme: South
of the Border**

**October
Woahink
Roadside
Clean-up**

**History of
Woahink Lake
Association**

**Meet Your
Board Members**
Bios and contact info



SOUTH OF THE BORDER FIESTA WILL BE A BLAST

**Woahink Lake Association invites you to a WINTER FIESTA
February 23rd 2020, 1:00 PM
The meeting hall/yurt at East Woahink**

Our Guest Speaker is from the Siuslaw Watershed Council

**Bring a dessert and personal beverages
(Coffee and water provided)**

Family and Friends are welcome to join in the Fun and Fiesta



OCTOBER WOAHING ROADSIDE CLEAN-UP

Our heartfelt thanks go to John Colwell and Pat Briggs for their hard work in organizing our bi-annual Woahink Lake Clean-up. We also appreciate and thank all those volunteers who came out to help keep our lake and it's surrounding areas cleaned of trash. During this event we had eight volunteers who picked-up a total of fourteen bags of trash. Fantastic Job!!!

We are always looking for more volunteers to this worthy project. If you're interested please sign-up with either John or Pat for at our upcoming Winter Fiesta WLA meeting, Feb. 23rd 2020 or contact John at: jhncolwell@yahoo.com or Pat at: briggs.pg1@gmail.com

Thank you!!!



A HISTORY OF OUR WOAHINK LAKE ASSOCIATION

By Del Riesenhuber

We are Woahink Lake Association (WLA). We were created in 1995 to maintain, protect, and enhance the quality of Woahink Lake and its surrounding watershed. Membership is open to any individual, family, business or organization that subscribes to the purpose of the Association and owns or leases property in the Woahink Lake watershed. We are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a President, Secretary, Treasurer and up to six members at large. We are organized as a Mutual Benefit Nonprofit Corporation.

Our founding members were Bob Anderson, Bill Barnum, Tom Cheronos, Darrel Helmuth and Susie Navetta. Darrel Helmuth was the first President. Other instrumental contributors in organizing WLA were Jim and Karen Peck, Naomi and Gerry Wasserberg, John Stead, and Joyce Keener. Members of WLA are inclined to be local activists who take an interest in things happening in Dunes City and the surrounding area that can potentially harm Woahink Lake. WLA itself is non-political, but that does not hinder the activities and efforts of our members.

The first action of WLA was dealing with our concerns about the development of a Big Bear RV Park and a youth camp in the Woahink Watershed by Eldon Nordahl. There were many meetings, letters sent to various governmental agencies, and hearings on this matter. Our Association was able to show that run offs from the proposed RV Park would be potentially harmful to Woahink Lake. Ultimately, primarily due to persistent efforts by WLA the project was stopped.

At the same time, we were concerned with the RV Park, there was also concern about run-off from property occupied by Foglio Trucking and an auto wrecking company close by. Our members were instrumental in convincing Honeyman Park to dedicate land for the creation of a settlement basin to contain and filter run-off that would reach the Lake. Over the years Woahink Lake Association has conducted a regular water testing program and monitored activities in the Watershed that could potentially harm Woahink Lake.

The Columbus Day storm in 1989 destroyed most of the timber and other vegetation in what is now the East Woahink Day Use Area. Honeyman Park cleared the devastation and graded property to develop the park. Following initial development, WLA members volunteered to work on erosion control at the park. A grove of Redwood trees and assorted shrubs were planted in the area. The Redwood grove was dedicated to the memory of Darrel Helmuth, our first president.

An educational program was developed to elimination of phosphorous in laundry and dishwashing soaps. Phosphorous has been proven to be harmful to the lake as it promotes growth of algae.

There was a period of seemingly uncontrolled development with little regard to the impact over-development would have on the lake. Dunes City's Comprehensive Plan and related ordinances and regulations were outdated and unable to cope with this situation. The mayor of Dunes City was actively promoting land development and was instrumental in the creation of several Planned Unit Developments (PUD'S). PUD's were a concern because they attempted to circumvent one-acre lot sizes, resulting in denser development than our members and other residents felt were appropriate for Dunes City. With considerable pressure from our members, Dunes City established a 120-day moratorium to put a hold on all development to give Dunes City Council and Planning Commission time to critically evaluate the City's regulations and to take appropriate actions.

Another serious issue is related to septic systems on properties surrounding the lake. It was learned that many septic systems had failed and/or had not been appropriately maintained. Dunes City attempted to create ordinances favorable to developers and ignored failed systems belonging to existing homeowners. Because there was so much concern over this issue, WLA and Oregon Coast Alliance filed suit against Dunes City in a LUBA (Land Use Board of Appeals) to force greater controls over septic systems. There was major concern related to periodic septic system inspections and pumping. Good management practices require that septic tanks be inspected and pumped every five years. Dunes City Council argued this was not necessary and attempted to create ordinances that did not require this action. LUBA ruled in favor of Woahink Lake Association and Dunes City was forced to create ordinances that require appropriate septic system maintenance.

Back in the PUD development days, one of the projects that was successfully stopped due to efforts of WLA and our members was a project to develop land for the construction of a PUD development in the Little Woahink Lake area. Again, concern was one of over-development and added run-off into the lake. Again, due to lack of follow-up by Dunes City, this project has arisen from the ashes. It seems that Dunes City had to take minimal action to continue to curtail this development.

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Failure to do so has resulted in a new development project presently proceeding in this area. Here, once more, is a history lesson. Little Woahink Lake was built as part of a plan to construct residential housing. The lake was created by building a dam across creeks that emptied into Woahink Lake, thus creating what is now known as Little Woahink Lake. No provision was built into the dam to permit salmon to migrate upstream. This ill-conceived project should never have been allowed. The developer lied to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, claiming salmon did not migrate up these streams. In hindsight STEP (Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program) developed and operates a fish trap that catches migrating salmon that then are moved above the dam by STEP volunteers.

So, why does WLA exist today? And why do we spend the time and effort in seemingly unrewarding efforts to protect Woahink Lake? I can only say that maybe we are not the most effective tool to maintain, protect, and enhance the quality of Woahink Lake and its surrounding watershed, but without WLA there is nothing.



MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

Del Riesenhuber has served as a board member, secretary, treasurer, and is currently the President of WLA. "Being Oregon natives, Barbara and I divide our time between homes in Dunes City and Los Gatos, California." del.riesenhuber@gmail.com

Linda Yoder, a Chicago native, arrived on Lake Woahink in 2011, moving from Peoria, Illinois, where she used to boat on the Illinois River. She has been Treasurer of WLA since 2016. lindayoder@hotmail.com

Margie Kelley, originally a native of New York, recently moved to Lake Woahink after living in Santa Cruz, CA, for the past thirty plus years. She worked as an Art and Photography teacher at several Bay Area High Schools before retiring. She is currently the Secretary for our WLA. 2bmoontouched@gmail.com

Pat Briggs moved to Woahink Lake in June 2017, having lived next to the Yachats River for the previous 24 years. She is retired from the health care field. Her passions are Nature, yoga, running, and art. She is just beginning her term as a member-at-large. briggs.pg1@gmail.com

Chris John is gainfully employed as a Project Manager. His wife Linda and he Purchased land in Dunes city in 2000, moved to Dunes City in 2007 and started to build their home on Russell Drive. The work continues. They joined WLA as members in 2008." Chris serves as a member-at-large. You can often see him on warm days on the lake sailing his Catamaran. cjohn@omysystems.com

Kath Cook was born in Australia and worked as flight attendant. She emigrated to the USA in 1996. She was Shanghaied into WLA by Del and currently serves as a member-at-large. Kath loves decorating the yurt for our events and is keenly interested in the health of the lake and of course, the catchment area. kathwaynecook@gmail.com

Suzanne Henderson is a member-at-large. "Ken and I fell in love with Florence and Dunes City while visiting good friends. In November 2007 we sold our home in Villa Park, CA and moved to Florence while our home was being built on Lake Woahink, and moved in August 2008. Everyday we count our blessings to live in such a beautiful place." suzycld9@mac.com

David Dumas is a member-at-large" in Woahink Lake Association. thedumas4@aol.com

Paul Gargis is a member-at-large" of the Woahink Lake Association. plgargis@aol.com



INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE

If you would like to contribute either stories relative to our life here on Lake Woahink or photos please submit content to Margie Kelley, email: 2bmoontouched@gmail.com