

Many here today are familiar with the Aquatic Wildlife Committee. However, I would like to start with a little overview especially for any new association members. This committee was formed in the summer of 2021 by 5 of us who met for the first time at a board meeting and expressed an interest in the wildlife in the lake and we then created this committee with the approval of the Board. We are a small group of passionate people who share a love of this lake, it's serene beauty and its abundance of natural resources, and diverse wildlife found in the water, land and air. We believe in safeguarding this ecosystem that is critical to the biodiversity and health of the lake and the surrounding natural resources. This stewardship is so important especially in a time when all over our ecosystems are shrinking and being destroyed due to contamination, toxic runoffs, use of poisons in the environment and the encroachment of increasing development.

Our mission is to identify and educate our association members about the different wildlife that is part of the Hidden Lake ecosystem and the interconnectivity in nature and species which is vital to the lake's resilience and health. We hope to explore and educate our members on understanding the importance of maintaining this biodiversity with sound practices that will continue to support its continued existence and beauty.

Our committee has also created quarterly newsletters that highlight some of the wildlife around the lake, some of it endangered, and ways that we can safeguard and positively maintain our lake and ecosystem. Some of our newsletters have focused on pollinators and plantings that would attract more bees and butterflies, again a population that is seriously declining and threatened, yet critical to food pollination and production. Our committee in the past, in response to some of the concerns of some of the members, have provided instructional handouts and, with the board's assistance, heavy gauge supplies to protect some of the trees to any lakeside member in need. We as a committee volunteered to complete a project of tree protection on all three beaches.

This year we hope to invite more members to some of the committee's projects, and to encourage our members, particularly those that live around the lakeside to see themselves as stewards of Hidden Lake in helping to maintain the health and growth of this natural environment. Our lake means so much to all of us and its health and serene beauty is in our hands.

In the future, we hope to continue with the newsletters and also possibly add some workshops for our members. Someone had mentioned about native vs non-native grasses or plantings and we're hoping to organize a workshop. It will be run by Mary Beth (our master gardener).

*Mary Beth: A couple meetings ago, there were questions and concerns brought up about the invasive species around our lake and growing in our lake. In response, we would like to put together a little workshop, possibly a walk around the lake, to try and identify some of the invasive species and identify some of the native species. The goal would be to get rid of the invasive planting, and add more of our native species around the lake. This would help maintain balance in the lake waters and lake edge. We will have more details about when and where as we put together this workshop."*

The other project that we're doing is that we will be creating butterfly pollinator gardens around Hidden Lake. Our plan is to plant three perennial gardens, two on the west shore and one on the east shore. We are in the beginning stages of planning this project, with Sandy's assistance in accessing some of the money that she has fundraised this past year for the resources needed for the supplies. Once the gardens are established, we will apply to the National Monarch Project so that we can be established as an official "way" station for the monarch butterflies in the national database. This would put Hidden Lake literally on the United States "monarch map".

Our committee would also like to recognize the incredible commitment of the lake committee for their vision and dedication and the work that they do in helping to protect and maintain the health of the lake. We would also like to recognize the dedication and commitment of the board in overseeing "all things LAKE" and ensuring that sound practices are followed to help maintain the health of this natural resource. Following these practices (no fertilizer, use of poisons, contaminants, dumping, leaves etc.) on

Hidden Lake Properties is critical in maintaining the quality and health of this lake. It is important to remind members that we can easily have a negative impact on the resources around us.

I would like to take this time to invite any member who is interested and supports what we do, would like to join the committee or if anyone has any ideas or concerns, please feel free to contact me or any of the committee members. There is also a sign-up sheet at the front desk if you want more information.

Our next meeting is going to be June 7 and our meeting dates are on the website. We welcome new members!

Respectfully submitted by Keha Esposito