

09-06 Meeting: Big Turkey Lake Association - Leadership, Financials, Events, and Operational Challenges

Big Turkey Lake Association Meeting Summary

Leadership and Board Updates

- Current officers: Joe Mishak (President), Shelby Carmichael (Vice President), Jonathan Morales (Secretary), Jeff Stevens (Treasurer).
 - Officer transitions: Joe (President), Shelby (Vice President), and Jonathan (Secretary) are stepping down; Jeff (Treasurer) will serve one more year.
 - New officers: Scott Harris elected as President, Marcus Tholen confirmed as Vice President, Alice Snyder elected as Secretary.
 - Shelby/Amy will lead bylaws revision.
 - Addition directors meeting spring of 2026; Old Wildwood seeking a director.
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Financial Overview

- **Starting Balance (Year):**\$96,700
 - **Current Balance:**\$118,590
 - **Funds Set Aside for Next Year:**\$10,550 (fireworks display)
 - **Fireworks Expenses:**\$13,000 (this year), \$10,000 (prior years)
 - **Fireworks Donations:**\$17,900 (potential for larger display next year)
 - **Fish Stocking Fund:**\$2,600 (last stocking 3-4 years ago)
 - **Membership Dues Collected:**\$17,675 (61% collection rate; last year 62% at \$18,700)
 - **Merchandise/Logo Items Sales:**\$11,325
 - **Fall Crawl Revenue:**\$11,700
 - **Golf Scramble Revenue:**\$8,000 (net profit \$4,500 after greens fees)
 - **DNR Grants:**\$4,000 (water management plan), \$5,600 (curly leaf pond weed treatment)
 - **Advertising Revenue for Directory:**\$2,700 (cost \$2,300)
 - **Lake Enhancement Expenses:**\$800 (new sign at public landing), \$5,000 (water management plan), \$7,000 (curly-leaf pond weed treatment), \$4,400 (Eurasian water milfoil treatment)
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Event and Project Highlights

- ****Golf Outing:****Third year; increased youth participation; positive feedback.
- **Fireworks Show:**
 - Barges purchased and refurbished; one donated this year.
 - Labor-intensive setup, transportation, and safety management.
 - Storage challenges due to lack of association-owned land; currently stored at lake resident's farmland – no problem storing there.

- Incident: Barge separation during transport due to wake from another boat, risking \$13,000 worth of fireworks and crew safety.
 - Need for more volunteers for labor, transport, and safety for future shows.
 - **Buoy Management:**
 - Transitioned to barge-based system for efficiency.
 - Labor-intensive and weather-dependent; wind can damage equipment.
 - Volunteers needed for end-of-season removal (target dates: November 14-15, weather permitting).
 - Issues with zip ties on shallow flags; need for secure attachment to prevent loss.
 - Red and green channel marker buoys aging; quote obtained for replacements.
 - GPS reset for buoys planned for fall.
 - **Aquatic Weed Control:**
 - Treatments for Eurasian water milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed completed privately due to lack of state funding.
 - Weed control effective; future priority is EWM and curly-leaf pondweed.
 - Hope for increased state grant funding in future years.
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Organizational Improvements and Accomplishments

- Formation of Big Turkey Lake Conservancy, Inc. 501C3.
 - Completion of dredging project (with Steuben County Drainage Board and Turkey Creek Funds).
 - Installation of new sign at launch.
 - Launch of new website (meeting minutes, event info, resources).
 - Creation of Gmail accounts for seamless transition and record-keeping.
 - Acquisition of three barges (plus one donated) for fireworks and buoy operations.
 - Partnership with fireworks company for successful shows.
 - Creation of flag markers for shallow waters.
 - Ramp update at public access.
 - Initiation of annual golf outing.
 - Streamlined buoy process for installation/removal.
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Bylaws Revision

- Bylaws need urgent amendment and update due to issues with state permitting (e.g., casino night, fall crawl).
 - Amy Donnelly and Shelby have historical copies of bylaws (from 1960s, 1990s).
 - Plan to form a committee (Amy Donnelly, Shelby, Bill Jones, April) this winter to redline and update bylaws.
 - Target: Approval by board/association at spring meeting.
 - Big Long Lake's updated bylaws will be used as a template.
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Steuben County Lakes Council & Water Quality

- Membership fees fund water quality, education, and scholarships.
- Luke Campbell received a \$5,000 renewable scholarship for environmental science at Northern Michigan.
- Water quality testing:
 - May: Big Turkey Lake sites all below E. coli threshold (highest: 93; threshold: 235).

- July: Two sites above threshold (Turkey Creek: 517, Big Turkey Outlet: 260); 31 of 49 county sites above threshold.
 - Rain events increase E. coli readings.
 - Big Turkey Lake generally in good shape compared to other lakes (e.g., McLeish Lake: 1550, West Otter: 1046).
 - Blue-green algae: No confirmed cases; protocol is to photograph and report to IDEM.
 - Fertilizer: Use phosphorus-free (middle number zero) to prevent algae blooms.
 - Advocacy for continued funding/testing at Big Turkey Lake despite county focus shifting to problem areas.
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Apparel, Directory, and Fall Crawl

- Apparel now ordered online via Auburn-based company due to previous logistical issues.
 - Christy Hansen and Wanietta Stuckey recognized for directory work; advertisers and members should contact via email for updates or additions
 - Fall Crawl event: Poker run around the lake
 - Sponsors donate prizes; participants encouraged to support sponsoring businesses.
 - Respect property during event; no animals, careful parking.
 - Safety emphasized, especially after dark; boat travel is an option.
 - Volunteers and sponsors needed for events (directory, fall crawl, fireworks, golf outing).
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Upcoming Events

- CPR class: September 27, 9am–noon at Stroh Fire Department.
 - BTL Bass Tournaments: September 13 (7:30am–1:30pm), October 11 (8am–2pm).
 - 2026 Spring Lake Association Meeting and apparel sale: May 2.
 - Blessing of the Boats: May 23.
 - Stroh Days: June 26–27; Fireworks: June 27.
 - Kids Fishing Tournament: July (date TBD).
 - Golf Outing: August 15 (tentative) at Heron Creek, LaGrange.
 - Fall Association Meeting and apparel sale: September 5.
 - Fall Crawl: September 12.
 - All events listed on website; more may be added.
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Operational Challenges and Needs

- Heavy reliance on a few individuals for labor-intensive tasks (fireworks, buoys).
 - Lack of association-owned storage space for equipment.
 - Need for more community volunteers to sustain events and operations.
 - Safety concerns during barge transport and fireworks setup.
 - Aging equipment (buoys, channel markers) requiring replacement.
 - Family and personal commitments leading to officer turnover.
 - Discussion about hiring paid help for buoys/fireworks setup due to physical demands and scheduling conflicts (Josh and Zach proposed as paid helpers; \$2,000–\$3,000/year suggested).
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Safety and Community Watch

- Reminder to report suspicious activity (e.g., stolen/resold items) to Nancy
 - Emphasis on community vigilance and protection.
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Communication

- Website (BigTurkeyLake.org) and Facebook page are primary sources for updates.
 - Treasurer and directory emails available for inquiries.
 - Continue updating website and maintaining digital records for seamless officer transitions.
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Next Arrangements & Action Items

- [] Recruit volunteers for fireworks labor (setup, transport, safety, cleanup).
- [] Organize sign-up sheet for fireworks crew; distribute contact info.
- [] Secure 3-4 trailers and trucks for barge transport (fireworks and buoys).
- [] Schedule buoy removal for mid-November (weather permitting); recruit volunteers.
- [] Ensure zip ties on shallow flags are checked and secured during removal.
- [] Replace aging red and green channel marker buoys (review obtained quote).
- [] Apply for state grants for EWM and curly-leaf pondweed treatments.
- [] Elect new President (one-year term) and confirm Vice President (two-year term).
- [] Begin training for Treasurer position for transition next fall.
- [] Form bylaw revision committee (Amy Donnelly, Shelby, Bill Jones, April); schedule meetings this winter.
- [] Prepare bylaws for spring approval; use Big Long Lake's template.
- [] Recruit addition director for Old Wildwood; hold quick addition directors meeting.
- [] Continue advocacy for water quality funding/testing at Big Turkey Lake.
- [] Encourage phosphorus-free fertilizer use among residents.
- [] Promote and prepare for upcoming events (CPR class, bass tournaments, Blessing of the Boats, Stroh Days, fireworks, fishing tournament, golf outing, fall crawl).
- [] Update website and Facebook with event details and any new events.
- [] Seek volunteers and sponsors for events and association roles.
- [] Finalize arrangements for paid help with buoys/fireworks setup (Josh and Zach; confirm compensation).
- [] Reset GPS locations for buoys in fall.
- [] Maintain community vigilance; report suspicious activity
- [] Direct advertisers to Christy Hansen and Wanietta Stuckey via email.
- [] Ensure apparel sales process is clear and accessible online.
- [] Recognize and support sponsoring businesses for events.
- [] Maintain communication and support for new officers from outgoing board members.