# The Gravel Laker

Volume XXII Number 1

www.gravellake.org

Summer, 2010



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# **President's Corner**

Gravel Lake needs a facelift! The early April hailstorm wreaked havoc at the lake and, by the looks of it, it's going to be a while before we're all back to normal. Contractors have flocked to Gravel Lake and other surrounding lakes. Hopefully, the upside of this storm will be a local economic stimulus and maybe some increased property values as many of us improve our homes. I've heard there's plenty of pictures floating around on Facebook and we've posted some on gravellake.org as well.

Expect another busy year at Gravel Lake with our continued sewer construction and the many events we have planned. This year, we've tried to plan activities more in advance. Some activities are not yet set in stone, but we've provided tentative dates where we can.

This is a good time to get out there and meet some new friends by attending an event or two, and by volunteering to help out. Contact me if you can help us by getting involved or if you have feedback. Constructive criticism is always welcomed.

Hoping your repairs go smoothly! Here's to yet another great, safe summer at Gravel Lake!

Craig DeSimone cucad4@hotmail.com



# 2010 Summer Calendar

June 12	1st GLA membership meeting, 10 AM @ Raab's pole barn
July 3	Fun Run, 9AM @ Willow Beach Grocery Kids Games, 12 PM in front of Willow Beach Grocery Paddle Boat Regatta, 6 PM in front of public access
July 4	Boat Parade, 2 PM in front of Willow Beach Grocery
July 17	Board of Trustees meeting, 10 AM @ Porter Township Hall 14th Annual Classic Car & Truck Show, 9AM-4PM, downtown Paw Paw
July 31	Bowling Outing, 7-10 PM @ Rainbow Lanes in Paw Paw, all ages welcome.
early-Aug.	Gravel Lake Social**
Aug. 14	2nd GLA membership meeting, 10 AM @ Raab's pole barn
Sept. 10-12	Paw Paw Wine and Harvest Festival, downtown Paw Paw

#### **Gravel Lake Social**

We are in the early stages of planning the Gravel Lake Social. Our plan is to have the event either the first or second weekend in August. For the last couple of years, our Silent Auction has been very successful. Please help us out! Though we solicit local businesses for raffle prizes and silent auction items, many of our most desirable items come from Gravel Lakers. Contact Suzanne Reed at redrazor25@yahoo.com with your donations.

#### Poker Run

The Fundraising Committee has discussed bringing an "aquatic" Poker Run to Gravel Lake. Look for more details online and via email.

# 2010 Fourth of July Activities

Here is this year's Fourth of July Activity line-up. Please note that all times are in Michigan time. And be sure to send your pictures to Jim McGreal at jim@jmcstudios.com so they can be uploaded to the Gravel Lake website.

#### Saturday, July 3

#### Sunday, July 4

9 am Fun Run

2 pm Boat Parade

12 pm Kids Games

6 pm Paddle Boat Regatta

#### Fun Run - Saturday, July 3 @ 9 AM

Participants will run or walk a two mile course that begins and ends at Willow Beach Resort. There is a \$4 entry fee. (The entry fee pays for food, awards, and other race materials. Any extra money goes to the GLA).

#### Kid's Games - Saturday, July 3rd @ 12 PM

As in years past, the Kid's Games will take place at Willow Beach Grocery. There is no entry fee.

#### Paddle Boat Regatta - Saturday, July 3 @ 6 PM

Racers should report to the Public Access at 5:30 PM. Register with Kerry Moore by 5:45. The race will begin promptly at 6:00. There are four divisions: 1-person kayak, 2-person canoe/kayak, youth paddle boat, and adult paddle boat. In order to qualify for the youth paddle boat division, both racers must be 12 years of age or younger. There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each division. There is no entry fee.

#### Boat Parade - Sunday, July 4 @ 2 PM

This year's theme is "Crazy for Cartoons!" So bust out some Bugs, Daffy, Mickey, Tom & Jerry, Dora, and whatever other cartoon character you love and get decoratin'! Register online by emailing Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com.



# **Sewer Update**

The following information was provided by Wrightman & Associates, Inc.

#### **General Facts:**

The sewer project is a \$10,833,000 project, of which \$1,433,000 is grant. The project is being funded through loan/grant funds made available through the USDA-Rural Development. The project is putting sewers around Gravel, Fish, Finch and West Saddlebag lakes and pumping sewage to a newly constructed treatment plant adjacent to the existing Village of Marcellus lagoons.

Bids were received on July 30, 2009. Construction began in early September 2009 and has continued to the present.

The LASA continues to meet monthly, generally on the 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Porter Township Hall.

The sewer system will be operated by a contracted operator. The LASA currently has an RFP out for these services and will be looking to enter into a contract with the successful offeror in the next few months. This is typical for this type of system in a Township without an established DPW. Both municipal and private offerors are being solicited.

LASA is nearing completion of a document that outlines the steps and requirements of the hook-up procedures for the homeowners. This should be published within the next month. I believe LASA will ask the lake associations to post the documents on their respective web sites to assist in the distribution of information. More to come on this soon.







#### **Construction: Collection System Sewers**

The contractor putting in the gravity sewer suspended work until spring. He anticipates being completed with all work by mid-June, which seems realistic.

The contractor putting in the lift stations and forcemain (between the lakes and wastewater treatment plant (WWTP)) is currently working. He has about 20% of the forcemain installed and has placed the lift station basins. He suspended work for the winter as well. He also plans to be completed by mid-June, which seems realistic.

90% of the sewer main, service leads and forcemain around Gravel Lake are installed. Only the [Gephard Drive/Minnie Court/Willow Drive] and [Lakeshore Drive/Lagoon Court] areas remain. Start-up of the lift stations and final restoration will also need to be completed.

0% of the work around Fish Lake is complete.

The sewer main, service leads, lift stations and forcemain on the north side of Finch Lake are installed. Only the lift station on the south side is complete.

The grinder station on West Saddlebag Lake has been installed. Other than that, no work is complete for this lake.

Construction has progressed well to this point. Contractors are on-schedule to meet the contract deadline of August 19, 2010. Most all residents have been understanding and a pleasure to work with thus far. The contractors have been pretty accommodating as well.



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#### **Construction: Wastewater Treatment Plant**

The WWTP is located southeast of the Village of Marcellus, south of M-216 on Hemlock Lake Road (about 0.6 miles).

The WWTP construction is 35%+/- complete. To date, two of the three buildings are under construction, underground piping has been installed, and all major basins are either poured or will be shortly. The contractor anticipates being completed by the beginning of June. Depending on weather, this may be pushed into mid-July. The contract deadline for this contractor is also August 19, 2010.

Due to the prospect of additional grant funds remaining at the end of the project, LASA is looking into adding a septage receiving station for the WWTP. Not originally in the project plan, this would help generate revenue for the facility, be of benefit to local waste haulers, and help keep sewer rates lower.

#### For additional information, see below.

#### 1. Wastewater Collection System

The wastewater collection system to be operated and maintained will include approximately 40,000 feet of gravity sanitary sewer, 67,000 feet of forcemain, 7 lift stations, and 7 grinder stations located around Fish and West Saddlebag Lakes in Marcellus Township, Cass County, Michigan, Finch Lake partially located in both Marcellus and Volinia Townships, Cass County, Michigan, and Gravel Lake in Porter Township, Van Buren County, Michigan. The system discharges to a newly constructed treatment plant located east of the existing Village of Marcellus treatment lagoons along Hemlock Lake Road, south of M-216. The discharge to the plant is from two main lift stations (#1 and #6) on Drive A on Gravel Lake (#1) and Red Run Road on Fish Lake (#6), through approximately 22,710 feet of 10" and 12" forcemain included in the above total.

#### 2. Wastewater Treatment System

The wastewater treatment plant consists of a 250,000 gpd extended aeration activated sludge facility with tertiary filtration, ultraviolet disinfection, post aeration, and discharge to Creamery Creek. The plant is located southeast of the Village of Marcellus, Michigan, on the west side of Hemlock Lake Road, approximately 0.6 miles south of M-216. The sludge system includes a concentric aeration/clarification basin which may be converted to a digester and gravity thickener, rotary lobe sludge pumps for RAS/WAS transfer, sludge storage for approximately 32 days of storage (without decanting), and rotary fan press dewatering equipment for ultimate landfill disposal. The treatment plant includes a Main Control Building with a lab, office, conference room and maintenance garage for the use of the selected firm. The treatment plant also includes two additional buildings to separately enclose the dewatering process and sludge pumps, respectively. A septage receiving station, including a building enclosure, grit removal, rock trap, screening, equalization basin and card reading system is being proposed as part of the current project as funding permits. Lastly, the Village of Marcellus main lift station (100,000 gpd +/-) and lagoon effluent lines have been connected to the headworks channel of the plant to provide treatment capacity to the Village of Marcellus.

# **Weed Treatment Update**

We have successfully renewed our special assessment district (SAD) for weed control on the lake. The SAD will extend from 2010 through 2013 and owners will be assessed \$26.00 per year (for a total of \$104.00 over four years). A surplus from our last SAD has allowed this reduced assessment rate. The surplus is due, in large part, to the great success we've had in controlling Eurasian Watermilfoil. The SAD is virtually unchanged in terms of properties included.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to begin treatments in 2010 until June due to the contract renewal and the time it takes to get permits approved. We will do our best to give advance notice of upcoming treatments.

# Storm Damage at the GL

On April 6, 2010, a severe thunderstorm ripped through Southwest Michigan, including Gravel Lake. Winds up to 72 miles per hour were recorded, as well as hailstones up to one-inch in diameter. These winds and hailstones caused windows to shatter, screens to shred, shingles and siding to rip off of houses, and trees to topple. There was also major damage to siding due to the hail, with hundreds of holes in the sides of some homes, resembling the peppering of gunshot. Contractors were out in full force the Saturday after the storm, giving estimates and soliciting for business. Hopefully, this is the last we have seen of this kind of storm for a very long time. Go to www.gravellake.org to see pictures of the damage.









# **Required Equipment for Boating**

Boating is a great way to enjoy the lake. It is, however, not without risk. Some additional equipment is required to make boating both safe and legal.

- 1) Fire Extinguisher: a Type B fire extinguisher is required on almost every vessel, including PWCs.
- 2) Personal Flotation Devices (PDF): Make sure you have the required number of PFDs, and check that they are in good condition. The requirements are as follows:

	Type of Vessel				
	Under 16ft. Length	Over 16 ft. Length	PWC		
Under 6 Yrs. Old	Must wear Type I or II life jacket at all times on any watercraft				
Under 12 Yrs. Old	1 Type I, II, III, or IV per occupant	1 Type I, II, or III per occupant / towed	1 Type I or II per occupant / towed		
Over 12 Yrs. Old	1 Type I, II, III or IV per occupant	1 Type I, II, or III per occupant / towed	1 Type I, II, or III per occupant / towed		
Special		Vessels over 16 ft. must have at least 1 additional Type IV onboard			

Type I and II vests are typical orange life vests, designed to turn their wearer face up when in the water.

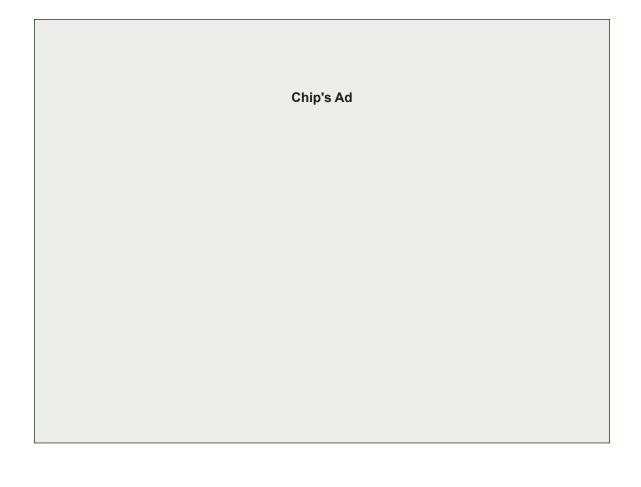
Type III vests are typical sport life jackets, not necessarily designed to turn the person face up.

Type IV vests are throwable cushion or ring type floatables.

- 3) Michigan law states that a vessel's muffler or exhaust system must prevent noise in excess of:
  - a. 90 decibels at idle from three feet away and ...
  - b. 75 decibels when measured from the shore.
- 4) Navigation Lights: red and green sidelights and an all-around white light are required only when the boat is underway (moving) between sunset and sunrise or in fog, rain or haze.

While being properly equipped to boat safely is necessary, it does not ensure boating safety. Remember to not only keep all of this equipment with you, but also follow the rules of safe navigation to ensure a summer of safe boating. For these rules and more, visit the DNR's boater safety handbook online: http://boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/boater education.htm.

Marc Mascarello, Contributor



#### Sources

Wildlife Segment

http://www.itsnature.org/air/birds-air/red-winged-blackbird/

http://birdweb.org/birdweb/bird\_details.aspx?id=438

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/red-winged\_blackbird/id

google images

**SPF Article** 

http://www.medicinenet.com/sun\_protection\_and\_sunscreens/index.htm http://www.aad.org/media/background/factsheets/fact\_sunscreen.htm

# **FEMA Flood Plain Maps**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has recently updated flood plain maps in our area. As a result, most homes surrounding lakes in our county (and other counties) are deemed to be in a flood plain. Consequent to this, some mortgage providers are requiring home owners to purchase flood insurance at great cost (\$1,000 or more). The Gravel Lake Association approached the Porter Township board on this topic for guidance on resolving this situation. In short, the Van Buren County board of commissioners has taken a stance against FEMA by issuing a resolution for FEMA to rectify its maps. "...the Van Buren County Michigan Board of Commissioners encourages the Federal Emergency Management Agency to take every available action to revise and rectify any and all errors in flood plain maps at no expense to the subject property owners thereby relieving the property owners of the undue burden and expense of having to correct a situation for which they have no responsibility." The Gravel Lake Association encourages owners who are expected, by their mortgage holders, to purchase flood insurance to refer to this document which can be found on <a href="https://groups.google.com/group/gravel-lake-association?hl=en.">www.gravellake.org</a> as well as our Google group: <a href="https://groups.google.com/group/gravel-lake-association?hl=en.">https://groups.google.com/group/gravel-lake-association?hl=en.</a>



# **Treasurer's Report**

Beginning Balance as of 1/1/10 \$14,965.72

**Deposits** 

2009 Membership Dues \$78.00 2010 Membership Dues \$148.00

Total Deposits \$ 226.00

**Expenses** 

The Michigan Riparian \$368.00

Total Expenses \$ 368.00

Checkbook Balance as of 4/10/10 \$14,823.72

Other Assets:

Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 6/12/10 \$5,192.86 Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 6/12/10 \$5,192.86 Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 9/12/10 \$5,243.25

Total Other Assets \$15,628.97

Total Funds \$30,452.69



# **Raspberry Lemonade**

Not too sweet, but still has a little zip to it. Easy to prepare, then sit back and enjoy.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 (12 fl. oz.) can frozen raspberry lemonade concentrate
- 3 cups water
- 3/4 t lime juice
- 1 (12 fl. oz.) can or bottle of Sprite or 7UP
- 1 cup crushed ice
- 1 cup fresh raspberries, garnish (optional)
- 18 mint leaves, garnish (optional)

#### **Directions**

 In a large punch bowl, combine raspberry lemonade concentrate, water, and lime juice. Stir in lemon-lime soda and crushed ice.
 Garnish with a raspberry and mint leaf.



# **Perfect Guacamole**

A classic guacamole dip. Leave the pit in the dip to slow the browning process!

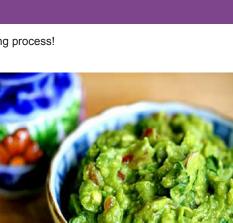
#### Ingredients:

- 2 ripe avocados
- ½ red onion, minced (about a half cup)
- 1-2 serrano chiles (or jalapeños), seeds and stems removed, minced
- 2 T cilantro leaves, finely chopped
- 1 T of fresh lemon or lime juice
- ½ coarse salt
- · Dash of freshly grated black pepper
- 1/2 ripe tomato, seeds and pulp removed, chopped
- 1 garlic clove
- 5 drops green Tabasco sauce (optional)

#### Directions

- 1. Cut avocados in half. Remove seed. Scoop out avocado from the peel and place in mixing bowl.
- 2. Using a fork, mash the avocado. Add the chopped onion, garlic (mashed with a garlic press), cilantro, lime or lemon juice, salt and pepper and mash some more. Chili peppers vary individually in their hotness, so start with a half of one chili pepper and add to the guacamole. Increase amount of chili pepper to desired degree of hotness.
- 3. Just before serving, add the chopped tomato to the guacamole and mix. Serve with tortilla chips or pita chips.

TIP: If serving later, place plastic wrap directly on the surface of the dip to prevent oxidation from the air reaching it.



# Sunscreen 101

Stay safe in the sun this year! Here are some sunscreen FAQs.

#### How is sunburn best prevented?

The best ways to avoid sunburn are to limit time in the sun, especially between peak sunlight hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., wear protective clothing, wear a hat that covers your face and neck, and use protective sunscreen to minimize the penetration of the sun's UV rays.

#### What is sunscreen?

Sunscreen is any substance or material that protects the skin from UV radiation. Sunscreens are available in the forms of topical lotion, cream, ointment, gel, or spray that can be applied to the skin; a salve or stick that can be applied to the lips, nose, and eyelids; a moistener in towelettes that can be rubbed against the skin; sunglasses that protect the eyes; certain types of sun-protection clothing; and film screen that can be affixed to the windows of a car, room, or office.

#### What is meant by SPF?

SPF, an abbreviation for sun-protection factor, is a number such as 15, 30, or 50 that indicates the degree of sunburn protection provided by sunscreens. SPF is related to the total amount of sun exposure rather than simply the length of sun exposure. It is a common mistake to assume that the duration of effectiveness of a sunscreen can be calculated simply by multiplying the SPF by the length of time it takes for him or her to suffer a burn without sunscreen. because the amount of sun exposure a person receives is dependent upon more than just the length of time spent in the sun. The amount of sun exposure depends upon a number of factors including the length of exposure, time of day, geographic location, and weather conditions.

A common mistake is applying too little sunscreen, which can drastically reduce the effective SPF of the product. About 1 ounce (5-6 teaspoons) of sunscreen is recommended to cover the entire body. Further, sunscreen must be reapplied every two hours when staying outdoors for a prolonged period of time. Sunscreen should also be applied at least 30 minutes before going outdoors People with sensitive skin who burn quickly and must spend a lot of time outdoors should always apply a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more.

#### Are all sunscreens equally effective against UV radiation?

No. Some sunscreens protect against only one type of ultraviolet radiation: ultraviolet-B (UVB). Others protect against both types of ultraviolet radiation that reach earth's atmosphere from the sun: ultraviolet-B and ultraviolet-A (UVA).

Sunscreens that protect against both UVA and UVB, and are thus classified as "broad spectrum," are recommended for everyone.

#### Do water or perspiration wash off sunscreen?

Yes. Therefore, sunscreen should be reapplied at least every two hours when staying outdoors for a prolonged period and after swimming, bathing, perspiring heavily, or drying off with a towel. Water- and perspiration-resistant sunscreens are available. However, even their protection will not last indefinitely.

# Sunscreen 101 - continued

#### Should everyone use sunscreen protection?

As a general rule, babies 6 months of age or younger should not have sunscreen applied to their skin because their bodies may not be capable of tolerating the chemicals in sunscreens. Instead, they should be kept away from sun exposure.

Everyone over 6 months of age should use a sunscreen regularly unless they and their doctors decide it would be better to protect the skin in other ways.

#### How do I know if I'm picking a good sunscreen?

The only way to determine if a sunscreen protects against UVA and UVB radiation is to look at the ingredients. A good broad-spectrum sunscreen should have an SPF of at least 15 and should contain avobenzone, titanium dioxide, or zinc oxide. And don't forget, you can apply the best sunscreen out there, but if you skimp on application, you won't get the best coverage. You should be applying about a shot glass full of sunscreen to your body. Don't forget to apply sunscreen to those places easily forgotton: tops of the ears, tops of the feet, lips, and the back of the neck.

# **FOUND: Set of Car Keys Gravel Lake**

It's not so unusual to find a set of keys; folks lose car keys all the time. Keys are lost in parking lots, grocery stores, between the sofa cushions and on the volleyball court. All places where if you look long enough or if someone sees them and turns them in, they are easily recovered. If you happen to be skiing, wake boarding or fishing and you lose your keys, the odds are pretty good that those keys are long gone. So just what are the odds that Winifred Melton and her son, Bruce, would drag up a set of car keys on their boat anchor? Well, it happened! Winie and Bruce were pulling up anchor on the old pontoon heading in after a not so successful outing, when Bruce noticed a small clump on the mushroom anchor. Not so unusual as there is always a clump of guck on the anchor but when he grabbed it to pull it off he saw a key poking out of the weeds. A quick rinse in the lake and he had a set of keys on a ring with a metal fob. "We'll be happy to return the keys, just identify the fob," said Bruce.

#### Bruce Melton





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# **Red Winged Black Bird**

Red Winged Black Birds love to sit atop cattails and can be found perching in the swampy lands and run-off ponds found in the surrounding areas of Gravel Lake. The males are identified by a red and yellow patch on their wings, but the females are often a more subdued dark brown color with a soft white eyebrow. These birds are found near marshes, swamps, or farmlands across North America, Mexico, Guatamala, and Costa Rica.



Male Red Winged Black Bird



Female Red Winged Black Bird

These colorful birds are definitely not the monogamous type. The male usually takes between 2 and 15 mates and he is very territorial during breeding season. Females incubate 3-4 bluish green eggs in a grassy nest that usually sits on the shoreline of standing water. The female is the primary caretaker and she will feed the young for up to 2 weeks before they venture off on their own. On occasion, if the young birds come back, the mother will continue to feed them while they are on her territory. Generally, the female Red Winged Black Bird will only have one brood before she retires from motherhood. Though territorial when it comes to breeding, during the mating off-times, these birds form a close knit community and the flocks will pack into small areas to eat and rest.

In the wintertime the main source of food for these birds is grains and seeds. A typical summertime meal for a Red Winged Black Bird is seeds, dragon flies, or other insects in the larval stage that usually reside in standing water. Because of their seed consumption, these birds can become a problem for farmers.

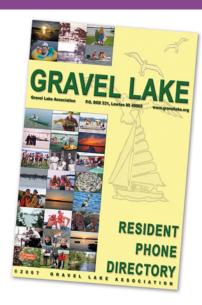
The best places to spot these birds near Gravel Lake are high above on telephone wires, perched atop a corn stalk, or sitting on a cattail along 94th Avenue ("Swamp Road") or around Strawberry Lake. If you want to attract the Red Winged Black Bird to your yard, spread grains or seed on a patch of lawn in your yard, because these birds prefer eating from the ground. Listen for their song. It sounds like: "conkla-lee"!

Tricia Barker, Contributor

# **GLA Phone Book**

The Gravel Lake Association will produce another phone directory this year and will distribute it free of charge to all 2010 dues paying members. The format will be the same, but will also include secondary contact information such as home phones or cell phones. Please provide this information when you pay your dues or email Janice Pinkos at fampinkos@aol.com.

We've decided to include secondary contact information due to the hail storm that occurred early this April. If you don't want such information included in the book, don't provide it or let us know not to print it. We're still looking for help with advertising solicitation. Since this is our best fundraiser, we need all the help we can get. Let us know if you can help contact local businesses or if you'd like to advertise your personal business. Contact Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com.



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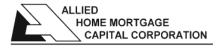
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Gravel Lake Association		
Membership Form: January 2010 - December 2010		
Fill out and mail to: Gravel Lake Association, P.O. Box 531, Lawton, MI 49065		
This document is also available on the website @ www.gravellake.org.		
Please print clearly.		
Member name(s):		
Beach: Lake Phone:		
Gravel Lake Address:	Lawt	on, MI 49065
Home Address:		
City: State:	Zip: -	
Home Phone:		
E-mail address:		
Please print clearly. Mail Check or Money Order payable to Gravel Lake	Assoc	eiation
Membership dues for 2009 Optional Riparian magazine		\$35.00 \$ 8.00
Additional Donation	_	
Total Enclosed	_	\$
Please indicate where your Riparian should be sent (circle one):	home	lake

SIBZ By Jim McGreal















# Classified ads — Free for paid members!

A reminder to all dues-paying members that classified ads on the website are a free benefit of your membership. This includes advertising your personal business. Links to websites or color advertising can be discussed as well, but may entail a fee. Questions and ads can be emailed to Jim McGreal at jim@jmcstudios.com.

## **Board of Trustees Contact List**

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# Gravel Lake Association

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