



December 23, 2024

Hidden Lakes Homeowners Association

2024 Homeowner Year-In-Review

Water Quality

Lakes and Canals

Our lakes and canals are the most important amenity of our neighborhood, and water quality issues were a top priority in 2024. As many neighbors are aware, while we use Hidden Lakes and Center Lake for recreational purposes, its use is at your own risk. Our lakes are part of a larger stormwater drainage system in Mount Pleasant and we receive runoff from our immediate surrounding areas. Consequently, our lakes and canals can be affected by external factors.

Solitude Lake Management provided water quality monitoring and treatment to our lakes and canals this year. While phosphorus levels were elevated late in 2024 during our high temperature weather, we did not experience algae blooms or excess vegetation. In addition, testing of water temperatures and dissolved oxygen in fall 2024 showed results in normal ranges.

This year, to improve water oxygen movement, we replaced the compressor pumps for the Center Lake aerators and have ordered replacement compressor pumps for the West Lake, as well as replacement air lines and diffuser heads for all diffusers in Center Lake and the West Lake.

Solitude Lake Management

Based on the positive water quality results we achieved during 2024, we have signed a three-year contract with Solitude Lake Management as the HOA water quality vendor as of January 1, 2025. The Solitude Management plan includes

- 1) 2x per month aquatic specialist to visit for:
 - Aquatic weed control
 - Shoreline weed control
 - Pond algae control
 - Trash removal
 - Fountain Maintenance
- 2) Air Diffuser Aeration System Maintenance
- 3) Service reports submitted each month -4x per year water samples taken and tested

For interested homeowners, Solitude Lake Management has an extensive resource library of educational materials on lake and pond management located on their website and on YouTube (www.solitudelakemanagment.com).

Update on Mount Pleasant Waterworks deep well water project

In 1999 and 2017, easement agreements were signed in perpetuity with Hidden Lakes HOA boards of the time giving rights to the Town of Mt. Pleasant and Mt. Pleasant Waterworks to access our land and our waterways. Mount Pleasant Waterworks completed a deep well water project in 2023, which began in approximately 2016, and which discharged 98-degree F water into the Hidden Lakes portion of the stormwater drainage system. From October 2022 to April 2023 (except for February/March 2023 when the previous Board requested a delay, due to blocked drainage from Hidden Lakes) the discharge from that deep well project was 1600 gallons/minute, running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The current status is that the discharge into Hidden Lakes will now occur only intermittently. When the deep well is shut down and restarted, water is dispersed to flush the pump system, and then be discharged into our lake system. The discharges continue to be high temperature, so in 2024, the Board remained in contact with Mount Pleasant Waterworks to monitor the discharge volume:

January – 2.2 million gallons

February – 2.6 million gallons

March – 1.5 million gallons

April – 1.2 million gallons

May – 1.0 million gallons

June – 0.5 million gallons

July – 0.7 million gallons

August – 0.4 million gallons

September – the well was off during September 2024. Mount Pleasant Waterworks has been running their other well since the end of August 2024, and plans to run the other well, which does not flush to Hidden Lakes, throughout the fall and winter.

Lake and Canal debris removal

In 2012, the Board adopted a policy that the HOA would not clean any of the 9 canal endcaps. In 2023, the Board reversed that policy, based on expert opinions that decomposition of organic debris can elevate phosphorus levels in lakes and ponds. In 2024, all endcaps were cleaned, the 90-degree turn of the canal next to the Rifle Range fence was cleaned, and weeds climbing the fence on the Rifle Range portion of the canal were trimmed. In addition, the areas in the West Lake and Center Lake near the pipes connecting the two lakes were cleaned.

Apple Snails

During 2024, we continued to see occasional apple snails and egg casings. If you see these egg casings, please continue to follow instructions from SCDNR. Removal of these egg casings will effectively reduce the viability of the eggs to zero and help to eliminate expansion of the population.

- 1) Pull egg casings off (use gloves)
- 2) Crush them
- 3) Drop them in the water.

Fountain Replacement

The fountain on the small pond at the Hidden Lakes entrance was replaced in 2024, and fountain lights were repaired on the large pond.

Summary of 2024 Water Quality Actions

- Contracted with Solitude Lake Management
- Replaced aging and non-functional lake aerator system
- Removed debris from waterways
- Replaced small pond fountain
- Continued to monitor water quality issues