

The Property Owners' Association of Deep Creek Lake, Inc. was granted a corporate charter by the State of Maryland in 1949 and grew out of 'Deep Creek Lake Association', founded sometime prior to 1938. It was formed to serve as the representative organization for lake residents. Over time that service has taken many forms including advocating for the members with county, state and federal officials, representing members' interests on various community leadership boards, contributing to community initiatives, providing legal interventions and always maintaining communication with the membership on issues of importance for quality of life at the lake and the entire watershed.

The POA is now a not for profit corporation which is an open, democratic institution and holds membership meetings twice a year that are open to the public as well as Board meetings that are open to the POA membership. The directors volunteer their services, and 100% of the membership dues directly support the POA mission. The Board is elected by the members and over the years the leadership of the POA has forged long term and close working relationships with all of the entities having any responsibility for Deep Creek Lake.

The last decade has seen numerous changes to the lake area and the POA has played a significant role in those changes. The state agency having the largest responsibility in relation to Deep Creek Lake is the Department of Natural Resources. For many years prior to the State's acquisition of the lake, the POA had a designated member on a DNR advisory body pertaining to the governance of the lake. The role of that body, however, was changed dramatically in connection with the acquisition of Deep Creek Lake by the State of Maryland. Prior to the acquisition of the lake, the advisory committee was just that, i.e., advisory, and it had no real role other than that of an advisor. When the process began for acquiring Deep Creek Lake (a process prompted by the POA's proposal to the Maryland General Assembly that a special taxing district be created to acquire the lake), the POA worked with DNR officials and State legislators to establish a new Policy and Review Board which, by statute, includes the POA President or designee as a board member. Of greater importance, however, is the fact that the legislation adopted contemporaneously with the acquisition of Deep Creek Lake provided that no regulation affecting the lake, nor any fee, may be established without the review and approval of the Policy and Review Board.

The POA also worked closely with DNR officials in connection with the acquisition of the lake and, working with the late Eugene Lynch, Secretary of

the Department of General Services, we were able to negotiate conditions under which property owners could "buy down" excess land between their property and the buffer strip. Also of importance is the fact that the POA was successful in convincing the State to include in the buy down process the right of a property owner, whose well or septic system later fails, to extend a septic system into the buy down parcel subject, however, to ordinary Health Department approvals.

The POA has also worked diligently to establish good working relationships with the County Commissioners. POA officers meet on a regular basis with the County Commissioners, and a number of past and present Board members have served the county government in a variety of capacities to foster a close and respectful relationship. Members of the POA board of directors serve on many other boards and



Courtesy of Wisp Resort

organizations such as Garrett Zoning and Planning Commission, DNR's Water Quality Study Work Group, Emergency Planning Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Garrett College Foundation and many other non profit boards in the area. POA board members are involved not only as board members but also as active community volunteers.

The POA has hosted two Workshops, one in December 2010 and the other in December 2011. The purpose of these successful gatherings was to bring together representatives of those organizations who care about a healthy lake and to improve communication between and among these groups. The North American Lake Management Society, NALMS, is the leading national association addressing the issues facing all who advocate for healthy lakes. As a member, the POA has access to their years of expertise and guidance on the issues facing Deep Creek Lake. It has provided funding for the annual fireworks display, the purchase of defibrillators for all Sheriff's Department cruisers, the cell phones for use by the NRP, for the gypsy moth spraying and to the cost of Phase II of the DNR Sedimentation Study of the lake.

The POA board of directors seeks to maintain open communication and cooperation with local and state officials. In preparation for the 2010 elections, we drew up a series of questions for the candidates that covered issues of particular concern to our membership. The responses were shared with the

membership to help them make informed decisions in supporting candidates. To establish our connection with the newly elected county commissioners, we held a “getting to know you” social for them during the winter holiday week.

Throughout the years, the major function of the POA continues to be keeping our membership informed on issues affecting property owners. In the past decade we have added to the traditional printed newsletter, *The Deep Creek Dispatch*, with the electronic *eDispatch*. The move into the information age technology has enabled us to provide ongoing communication beyond our quarterly newsletters. We now send eBlasts to our members for timely notices and updates. These communications allow us to alert members on urgent matters as well as provide rumor control on others. In addition to email communications, the POA has this website. The site contains answers to FAQs about lake use, regulations, resources and specific functions of the POA.

The POA is the oldest and largest organization advocating for the interests of the stake holders of Deep Creek Lake. There are other organizations that have an interest in Deep Creek Lake, and the more organizations cooperating and advocating for the lake, the better.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.