

# THE GLQO WATERSHED JOURNAL

The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.



## President's Message

By Joe Lukeman, President

Whether you love Gull Lake for boating, fishing, swimming, sailing or stunning views over the water, you understand the importance and value of keeping lake waters clean. I'm proud to be the new President of GLQO as the next generation of like-minded people who want to be involved in activities that protect and enhance Gull Lake.

Our mission will continue to protect water quality in Gull Lake and the surrounding watershed by monitoring water quality in Gull Lake and adjacent Little Long Lake, organizing annual surveys of aquatic invasive plant species in Gull Lake and **pay to have them removed**, maintain and operate the boat wash at the Prairieville Township Park, support efforts to maintain a healthy sport fishery and promote ways that lake residents can protect and improve water quality.

Our mission continues to thrive due to our membership who contribute annual dues and the generous board members who contribute time and energy to our common cause.

As we welcome Spring and ease into another beautiful summer here on the lake, please help introduce this organization to others and inform them of our mission. We cannot do it alone and by growing our numbers in membership we can keep our beloved waters clean and healthy for future generations.

Here's to a safe and joyous lake season as the weather warms, the birds return and the first boat rides begin!



Yes, this is GLQO President Joe Lukeman on Gull Lake a few years back

## Spring 2026

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*The Gull Lake Quality Organization is an all-volunteer organization. Our mission is to protect water quality in Gull Lake and the surrounding Watershed.*

**Attention Photographers!** Do you have a stunning photo of our local lakes and streams that you'd like to share with our members and the public? If so, please email it to [photos@glqo.net](mailto:photos@glqo.net), and we'll add it to our website's [Photo Gallery](#)! We'd especially like to see pictures of beautiful lakescapes!



The GLQO thanks Board member Kathy Gallagher for this January image of a Gull Lake sunrise

## Spring 'Short Notes'

By the GLQO Board of Directors

### Save the Date for the GLQO Annual meeting – Monday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

We will again be meeting in the Terrace Room in the Academic Building of the WK Kellogg Biological Station. This year's keynote speaker will be Melissa DeSimone, Executive Director of the Michigan Lakes and Stream Association (MLSA). Melissa is also a member of the Michigan Environmental Council and since 2025 has been its President. In both these roles she brings expertise about important environmental issues that affect inland lakes and the areas around them.

Plan to come for a fun and interesting evening – good food, beverages, and a beautiful sunset over Gull Lake. Registration encouraged, but not required (watch our website and Facebook page for RSVP information).



Melissa DeSimone,  
Executive Director, MLSA

### Summer jobs available at the GLQO Boat Wash

GLQO is again looking for part-time employees to staff the Boat Wash at the Prairieville Township Park on Gull Lake. Hours are primarily on weekends and holidays from mid-May through early September. Attendants are responsible for helping people wash their boats before and after being on the lake and provide owners with information about the importance of controlling aquatic invasive species. The Coordinator position requires more supervisory experience and can be designed to be an internship for college students interested in environmental issues. For more information about these positions and how to apply, see our Facebook page or [the post on our website](#).

### It's not too late to join or renew membership the GLQO

GLQO membership is open to everyone who enjoys Gull Lake and other lakes in the surrounding watershed. Membership is annual and starts at \$50/year for individuals, organizations or businesses. For more information about membership and how to join see our website, <https://glqo.net/join/>.

## Beyond the Name: Unveiling the Gulls of Gull Lake

By James Nolin, GLQO Board Member

### Why is it called Gull Lake?

Before settlers arrived, the first survey of Kalamazoo County was conducted between 1825 and 1826. Among the lakes surveyed in Ross Township, only Gull Lake was named by the surveyors. While the exact reason behind this naming has not been recorded, it is likely that the surveyors observed what we see today: hundreds or even thousands of gulls, seeking refuge and sustenance in these life-giving waters. Adjacent to Gull Lake lies Gull Prairie, the county's second-largest natural meadow, located in and around Richland. The first settlers to establish themselves in Gull Prairie arrived in 1830 and aptly named the prairie after the nearby lake.



Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)

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**Why do we have such a large population of gulls on Gull Lake?**

Unlike other inland bodies of water in southwest Michigan, Gull Lake boasts a significant population of gulls. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon, including the adaptability of certain gull species, the abundance of food resources, and the lake's strategic position within a larger regional ecosystem. Gulls are highly opportunistic and flexible in their habitat choices, making them well-suited to thrive in various environments.

The Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) is the most prevalent species on Gull Lake. Unlike other gulls that prefer coastal habitats near the sea or the Great Lakes, the Ring-billed Gull thrives near human habitation, far from the water. This species has experienced a massive boom in the Great Lakes region from the 1970s to 1990s due to abundant human-produced food and waste, such as farm fields, fast food remnants discarded in parking lots, and garbage cans and landfills. While less common, the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), a larger gull, is often seen on Gull Lake, but more so closer to the Great Lakes. Although the term seagull is often used to describe these birds, "gull" is the scientific term, while "seagull" is a colloquial term used to refer to any gull, particularly those found near coastal areas.

Gull Lake's healthy fish population attracts gulls to its "forage" species, such as shiners, bluegills, and minnows. Also in the summer, warm surface water causes fish that are caught and released to be weak or die due to low dissolved oxygen, making them easy prey for gulls. Gull Lake and the surrounding area provide food other than fish. Insects, such as mayflies or midges, emerge in the warmer weather. In the spring, freshly plowed fields provide insects, worms, and seeds. In late summer, agricultural harvest allows gulls to feed on spilled grain.

**Why does their population surge as the summer progresses?**

After the nesting season, which usually concludes in July, gull populations on Gull Lake experience a surge. Gulls abandon their breeding colonies and begin to gather and forage, their numbers increasing until the time of migration. They are willing to travel extensively in search of food, but they return to open water at night for safety from predators. A 2,000-acre lake serves as a vast roosting site, attracting birds from miles around, particularly at dusk. Evening "rafts" of hundreds or even thousands of gulls are common.

August and September are the peak months for migration staging. Young gulls are now capable of flying and foraging, resulting in larger flocks compared to early summer. These flocks follow adults to convenient feeding areas and areas of rest. Gull Lake serves as an excellent migration stopover point, especially considering its proximity to agricultural areas and the availability of open water into early winter.

**What are the benefits to these large flocks of gulls? Are there potential harms?**

The presence of a large number of gulls has both positive and negative ecological implications. Gulls can provide valuable services by moving substantial amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus from land to lakes, fertilizing them and contributing to nutrient recycling. Gulls help control populations of insects, rodents, and even frogs, adapting their diet to the available food sources.

On the flip side, the ecological concerns associated with gulls include the potential transmission of bacteria, such as *E. coli*, from waste sites to recreational areas. Furthermore, large populations of gulls can negatively impact other bird species by competing for food or nesting sites. Lastly, an excessive influx of nutrients, particularly phosphorus, can exacerbate nutrient pollution (e.g., eutrophication).

Ultimately, the gulls remain the defining feature of Gull Lake's identity. While their presence brings a complex balance of ecological benefits and challenges, they are an inseparable part of the landscape. Whether foraging in Gull Prairie or gathering in massive evening rafts, these adaptable birds ensure that Gull Lake remains as dynamic and life-filled today as it was when it was first surveyed two centuries ago.

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## Business Highlight: Thank You to Hawks Hollow Builders

*By Kay Gross, GLQO Secretary*

For Sera Gesmundo, supporting GLQO is both personal and professional.

Gull Lake holds a special place in the life of Sera Gesmundo, President and Owner of Hawks Hollow Builders. Sera spent summers at her grandparents', Gus and Midge Gesmundo, home on Wildwood Beach. "There were always lots of cousins, friends, and occasionally even some circus people to play with. It was always endless fun in and around the lake," she recalls. Her family still owns lake property in the Wildwood neighborhood, and it's not unusual to find Sera there enjoying time with family.

Hawks Hollow Builders was founded by her father, Jack Gesmundo, more than 50 years ago. Sera began working alongside him during college, developing both her eye for design and her passion for the craft of building. She earned her builder's license in 1999 and took over the company when her father retired in 2014. Today, she leads a team of nine dedicated to creating distinctive, high-quality homes that stand the test of time and reflect each client's lifestyle.



Hawks Hollow Owner Sera Gesmundo

Sera's connection to GLQO is rooted in both her personal history and her professional work. Having grown up loving Gull Lake, she now has the privilege of helping clients create retreats where they can enjoy time with friends and family, whether that means active days on the water or peaceful evenings watching the sunset. She encourages other businesses serving Gull Lake clients to get involved as well. "Our clients are drawn to this area because of the beautiful, clean water," she says. "GLQO plays a vital role in ensuring that continues."

Sera demonstrates her commitment to GLQO as both a Lifetime Business Member and Regular Member. She has served on the GLQO board and remains active on the Outreach and Communications Committee, helping spread awareness of the organization's work to protect the lake. For Sera, preserving Gull Lake is not just a responsibility — it's deeply personal.

### ***PS... Ever wondered how Hawks Hollow Builders got its name?***

Forty-seven years ago, founders Jack and Martha Gesmundo built their family home in a scenic hollow (a small valley) in Hickory Corners. They named their small farm "Hawks Hollow" to reflect both the landscape and the abundance of hawks that filled the skies overhead. That farm became the birthplace and for more than 20 yrs was its headquarters until the company moved to its current home in Richland. The name remains a reminder of the company's roots — grounded in family, land, and a deep appreciation for the natural beauty of this area.

## The Dam at Gull Lake

*By Jeff Price, Vice President, The Gull Lake Dam Association*

Residents of Gull Lake — and those who enjoy the lake — are fortunate that there are two organizations committed to protecting the waters of Gull Lake. The Gull Lake Quality Organization (GLQO) was formed in the 1970s to support the installation of a sewer system around the lake to reduce the input of phosphorous (from septic systems) into the lake. The GLQO continues to monitor the water quality of Gull Lake and to inform its members about issues that could impact water quality.

The Gull Lake Dam Association (GLDA, formerly the Gull Lake Association) traces its history back to the 1920's. The original dam was built in the 1830s to power a cereal mill located at the south end of the lake; one consequence of constructing this dam was that the Gull Lake water level rose, creating among other things a small island (that still exists today). The plant closed in 1906 and in 1921 the Gull Lake Association purchased the dam with the intent of controlling water levels in the lake. After 100+ years the dam was deteriorating and in 2018, the GLDA launched a campaign to rebuild the dam. In 2020 construction began on a new dam and the new dam became operational in May 2021.

The GLDA maintains water levels of Gull Lake at 879.39 feet (MSL, Mean Sea Level) in summer and lower in winter (878.39 MSL). These seasonal changes protect the shoreline in the winter and keep the water levels higher for boating, fishing, skiing and other activities in the summer. Recently a remote camera was installed at the site that provides a view of the water depth gauge and facilitates lake level control. Controlling the lake level can be challenging due to "pop up" storms - sudden, short-lived thunderstorms that form unexpectedly and bring a lot of water to the area. The new dam was designed to manage a 500-year storm, so the lake level can be maintained at the prescribed levels even after pop-up storms occur.

Both the GLQO and GLDA are all volunteer, non-profit (GLQO: 501(c)4, GLDA: 501(c)3) organizations that are supported by membership dues and donations. The two are often confused and dues payments for one are occasionally sent to the other – we make sure that gets straightened out! Both organizations are committed to ensuring that Gull Lake remains a beautiful place for residents and non-residents to enjoy. Both organizations deserve your support!

For more information about the GLDA see their website, <https://gulllakedam.org/contact>.



Water-depth gauge reading at 879.30



The new dam at Gull Lake

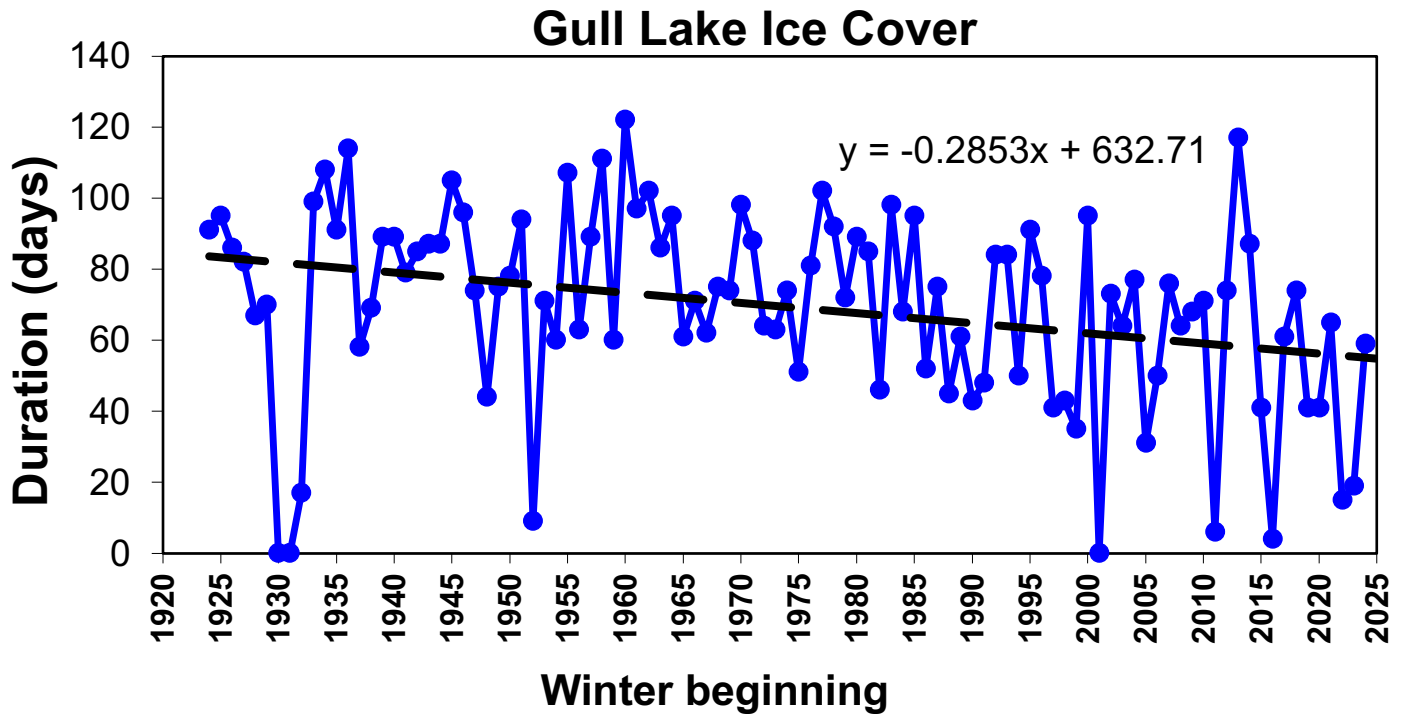
## Gull Lake Ice History

*By Gary Mittelbach, GLQO Board Member and Professor Emeritus, MSU and Steve Hamilton, Professor Emeritus, MSU*

Did you know that Gull Lake residents, along with MSU scientists, have been keeping track of Gull Lake freezing and thawing dates for over 100 years? During that time, there have been three years where Gull Lake has failed to freeze over entirely – two years during the dust bowl (1930 and 1931) and again in 2001. This winter, Gull Lake was relatively late to freeze over (see graph of freeze up dates). But once frigid temperatures arrived in January, 8-10 inches of ice formed and it was again a good year for ice fishing and other winter lake activities.

Long-term data show that ice cover duration on Gull Lake has been decreasing over the last 100 years. This pattern of shorter periods of ice cover on Gull Lake matches the trend observed on many other Midwestern lakes that have long-term records, including the Great Lakes. The decline in ice cover over the past 100 years is the result of planetary warming caused by increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since the industrial revolution. However, within this long-term trend there is a lot of year-to-year variation, making it difficult to predict what next year will hold. As scientists like to say, "Climate isn't weather." Long-term trends in temperature (and ice cover) are observable and can be correlated with changes in atmospheric composition, but short-term events like tomorrow's weather or next year's ice cover aren't as predictable. Also unknown are the consequences of reduced ice cover for Michigan lakes. For example, ice cover affects the lake water balance (evaporation ceases once ice forms) and ice protects shallow sediments and shoreline from erosion during

winter storms. In addition, the eggs of some important Great Lakes fish species (e.g., whitefish and cisco) develop under the ice and burbot (freshwater cod) even spawn during winter ice-over.



## 2026 GLQO Members

We aim to keep our membership lists accurate; those listed here are members as of March 14, 2026.  
Please contact us if you note an error or omission ([info@glqo.net](mailto:info@glqo.net)).

## Individual and Family Memberships

### LIFETIME (\$1500)

Mac and Susan Behnke  
 Sherwood and Sharon Boudeman  
 Jon and Susan Bowers  
 Roger C. Buddig  
 Janet and John Carrig  
 Alison and Rob Credit  
 Sally and Randy Crocket  
 Jerry and Sharon Cross  
 Jim and Barb DeKruyter  
 Kris and Claire Eager  
 Ron and Nanette Elenbaas  
 Bill and Betsi English  
 Mike and Kathy Gallagher  
 John and Sharon Garside  
 Jim and Barbara Gilbert  
 Steve and Elaine Ginsberg  
 Bonnie Gordon  
 Jim and Marsha Heath

Fred and Megan James  
 Si and Shirley Johnson  
 Todd Kingma and Betsy Kingma  
 Betsy & Brandon Klerk  
 Joe and Madison Lukeman  
 Chris and Laura Maloney  
 Ed and Nancy McCarty  
 Tom and Valli McDougale  
 Nick and Julia Miladore  
 Kate Miller  
 Kay Gross and Gary Mittelbach  
 James and Kristin Nolin  
 Robert and Kay O'Boyle  
 Barbara J. Parish  
 Donald and Sue Paulson  
 Eric and Martha Reid  
 Rollin and Crystal Richman  
 Paul and Karen Ringemann

Wendy and Doug Robbins  
 Tom and Judy Schau  
 Mike and Julia Sharp  
 Deidre and Doug Smith  
 William D. Johnston and Ronda E. Stryker  
 Bill and Ruth Ann Uggen  
 Sally Williams

### PLATINUM (\$500+/yr)

Brian and Jackie Rice  
 Timothy Tyler

### GOLD (\$250/yr+)

Nancy Brookins  
 John and Lynne Chipman  
 Bjorn and Lori Green  
 Henry Hawk  
 Ellen and Michael Keenan  
 John and Rita Light

Don and Ann Parfet  
 Camille M. Riley  
 Amy Upjohn and Brad Vandenberg  
 Tom and Marty Vander Molen  
 David P. Wilson

### SILVER (\$100/yr+)

Scott and Holly Allen  
 Rod Borton and Deb Ball  
 Anthony and Valerie Bartalone  
 David Battjes  
 Rick and Kathy Beauregard  
 Tom and Lynn Belco  
 John and Terry Berryman  
 Kevin and Mary Beyer  
 Dick and Debbie Boris  
 David and Heidi Boutell

Robert Boyle  
 Patrick and Kelly Boyle  
 Joe and Jane Brogger  
 Bob and Paula Cook  
 Jim and Amy Cronin  
 George and Lenore Elsener  
 Jim and Dottie Farwell  
 Ed and Nancy Fitzgerald  
 Dan and Mary Beth Gallagher  
 Ann and John Gallagher  
 Jean Gemrich  
 Sera Gesmundo  
 Bryan and Shelly Gildea Knight  
 Pete and Jo Hawk  
 Rick and Shirley Hebert  
 The Heilenbach Family  
 Mal and Pat Hickok  
 John and Kathy Keagle  
 John E. Kelly  
 Tim and Brenda Lantinga  
 Chris and Jackie Light  
 David and Kimberly Lund  
 Tom Mansager  
 Linda Markham  
 Russ and Connie McFee  
 Joyce Melvin  
 Kevin and Betty Miller  
 Mr. and Mrs. M. Murphy  
 Kris and Laura Nelson  
 James D. and Nancy L. Nordlie  
 Amy O'Boyle  
 Jeff and Amy O'Brien  
 Carla and Jerry Orwin  
 Karol Peterson  
 Kathy Keelan Pew  
 Jeff Price and Sue Harrison  
 Alison Pruitt and David Randell  
 Jim Rawsky  
 Bob and Margo Rebar  
 Carol Renz  
 Dave and Shelly Reynolds  
 Mary Jo and Robert Rial  
 Bill and Jane Ryan  
 Bruce and Kathy Shurtz  
 Bill and Nora Sikkema  
 Marilynn and Bob Simon  
 Peggy Staver  
 Carol Tedrow  
 Kurt and Mary Beth Thoman  
 Isobel and Matt Tracy  
 Jeanne Turner

Jim and Kathy Vander Kolk  
 Doug and Sandra Vander Lugt  
 Brian and Leisa White  
 Andrew and Kathleen Widner  
 David and Cindy Wiedemer  
 Bruce and Jean Williams

### **BRONZE (\$50/yr+)**

John and Amy Abbott  
 Lou Ann Ambro  
 Charlotte Ashton  
 Bud and Judi Baldwin  
 Jack Bargo and Patti Colasanti  
 Barbara Brundage and Bill Barton Jr.  
 Jim and Lesley Bodary  
 Randy and Janet Bonzheim  
 Sherwood and Kathryn Boudeman  
 Robert and Brenda Brenner  
 Stevie and Rob Brinkerhoff  
 Cleve and Sue Brown  
 Michael and Sara Brundage  
 John and Mary Budnick  
 Keith and Carole Buell  
 Robert and Belinda Bullard  
 Dan and Kathy Casey  
 Richard and Joanne Chamberlin  
 Gar and Robin Chapel  
 Gary J. Cirulli  
 Dorne and Connie Clark  
 Bonnie Cleasby  
 Brent and Sharon Coan  
 Bruce and Donna Cohen  
 Linda Cohen  
 David Creguer  
 Jim and Chris Cupper  
 Dwight (Randy) Curtenius  
 Diann and Jim Danhoff  
 Philip and Terri Dawson  
 David and Margaret DeLano  
 Brent and Julie Dingman  
 Larry and Diane Dopp  
 Dob and Jeree Drake  
 Lisa Duffy  
 Dr. David G. Dvorak  
 John and Jan Etcorn  
 Gerry Feldman  
 Jack and Patti Fleming  
 Joni and Roger Ganger  
 Judah Gesmundo  
 Jim Gesmundo  
 Michele Libbrecht and Jay Gesmundo

Gary Granger  
 Frank and Diane Guarisco  
 Gull Hills Tract Spring Creek  
 David and Michelle Halley  
 Bill and Marge Hannapel  
 George and Arla Hillebrand  
 Helen Hughes  
 Bruce Hutchinson and Betsy Bastien  
 Judy Jereck  
 Susanne Johnston  
 Mark Kerrins  
 Sue Markus and Rick King  
 Melinda Klerk  
 Joni and Tim Knapper  
 Dave and Kay Koldyck  
 David and Stella Krofcheck  
 Jane Kuckel  
 Jim and Linda Lass  
 Phyllis LaVene  
 Patricia L. Lawrence  
 Jamie Kneen and Leech  
 Wendy and Allan Levy  
 Longman Family  
 Liz Lukeman  
 Ron Mochizuki and Shelly Halper  
 Susan Morrow  
 John A. Mulholland  
 Greg and Gail Muliatt  
 Craig and Deb Mumy  
 Stephen and Christine Murray  
 Sean and Nicol O'Brien  
 Jerold and Maxine Orum  
 John and Susan Quertermus  
 Dan and Kay Rackiewicz  
 Martin and Carol Ranly  
 Ann E. Ransford  
 Justin and Carolyn Ridderman  
 Cheri Rose-Jones  
 Joe and Elizabeth Rosenberger  
 Rob and Lori Rowe  
 Brad and Rene Saar  
 Hal and Taffy Sanger III  
 Bonnie and Scott Sawusch  
 Steve and Gina Schau  
 Rick Schmiede and Jan Stoner  
 Greg and Charlene Schofield  
 Ken and Pat Schultz  
 Tom and Lisa Shannon  
 Esther Shaw  
 Jule Shaw  
 Craig and Bobbi Shumaker  
 Steve and Vicki Smith  
 Dr. and Mrs. Gregory Smith

Peter S. and Diane M. Czuk Smith  
 Joyce Snow  
 Charles and Jan Stoddard  
 Harry and Tineke Stolt  
 Samuel and Tommy Sue Stone  
 Stevie Symons  
 Gary and Karen Theisen  
 Ron and Edna Thompson  
 Alison Thor  
 Bill and Carolyn Ticknor  
 Carol Ticknor  
 Michelle Tombro Tracy and Chris Tracy  
 Jerry and Margaret Trepanier  
 Bob and Claudia Vaccaro  
 Dan and Becky Vander Meulen  
 Jon and Courtenay Vander Molen  
 Tim Vander Muelen  
 Tom and Bonnie Visser  
 Carol Vogt  
 Donna and Dan Weaver  
 Jill and Jay Wesley  
 Bob and Lori Wheelright  
 Brook and Emily Wilke  
 Stephen and Linda Winquist  
 Jerry and Kathleen Wojtala  
 Tammy Woodhams

## **Business and Organizational Memberships**

### **LIFETIME (\$1500)**

Gull Lake Sewer and Water Authority  
 Hawks Hollow Builders  
 Kellogg Biological Station  
 Prairieville Parks Commission

### **GOLD (\$250/yr+)**

Jaqua Realtors

### **SILVER (\$100/yr+)**

Gull Lake Ministries  
 Kooper's Car & Marine, LLC  
 Michigan Lawn Services, Inc.  
 NEDS on Gull Lake  
 Pender Boat Works

### **BRONZE (\$50/yr+)**

Gull Lake Country Club

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# The Gull Lake Quality Organization

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P.O. Box 144 / Richland, Michigan / 49083

Website: [glqo.net](http://glqo.net)

Contact: [info@glqo.net](mailto:info@glqo.net)



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## Upcoming Events

### **GLQO Board Meeting**

April 14, 2026

KBS Academic Building Terrace Room

### **65th Annual MLSA Conference**

#### **Renewing Our Waters: Renewing Our Promise**

May 1-2, 2026

Delta Hotels Michigan Convention Center

### **GLQO Board Meeting**

May 12, 2026

KBS Academic Building Terrace Room

### **GLQO Annual Meeting**

June 9, 2026

KBS Academic Building Terrace Room

## 2025-2026 Board of Directors

Joe Lukeman (27-1) **President**

Ellen Keenan (26-1) **Vice President**

Kay Gross (26-2) **Secretary**

Andy Widner (28-2) **Treasurer**

Tom Belco (28-2)

Kathy Gallagher (27-1)

Susan Harrison (26-1)

Steve Keith (28-1)

Trudy Luedeking (26-1)

Gary Mittelbach (26-1)

Jim Nolin (28-1)

Hank Pender (28-1)

Jay Wesley (28-2)

*GLQO by-laws allow volunteers to serve as directors for two consecutive three-year terms. After each Director's name are two numbers: the **year** their current term expires, and the **number** of the current term.*

*We welcome you to volunteer for committee work (of your choice) and to participate in our board meetings.*

*If there are ideas or issues that you think GLQO should address please contact any of the board members or communicate through our Facebook page or website.*

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**The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.**