

July 2024

Sylvan Lake Shoreline

Our Resident Raptors at Sylvan Lake

By Mike Trahan.

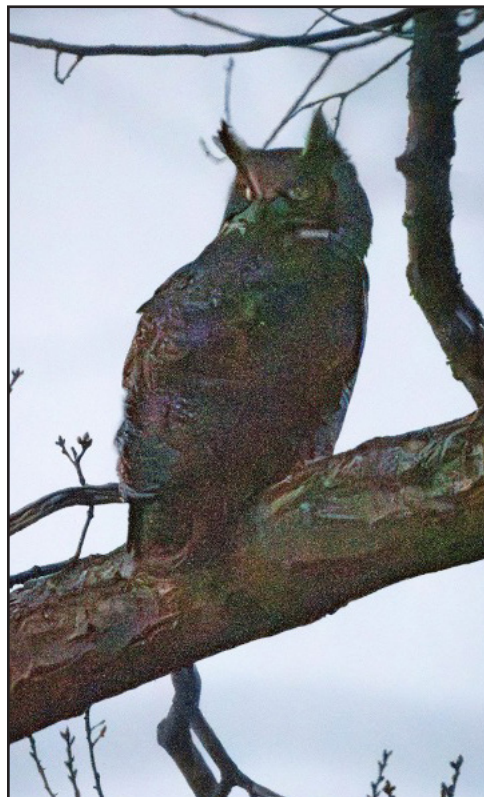
Pictures from Sylvan Lake

We're lucky enough to have several raptors, or birds of prey, that make Sylvan Lake their home. They include the Great Horned Owl, the Red-tailed Hawk, the Cooper's Hawk, and sometimes the Eastern Screech Owl. Other raptors, such as the Turkey Vulture, are regularly seen overhead in the summer and others, like the Bald Eagle, are occasionally seen as they migrate through in the Spring and Fall.

Great Horned Owl

If you open your bedroom windows a bit in January or February at night, you probably will hear our Great Horned Owls calling to each other. That's when they're nesting. A colloquial name for them is "hoot owl" and that's their primary call. You'll also hear them at other times of the year. Later in the spring, you'll hear the youngsters giving their begging call at night. Sometimes we see and hear the adult pair calling and flying around at dusk or in the evening. They are definitely night owls and big!

Great Horned Owls are apex predators. They eat almost everything else and almost nothing eats them.



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Sylvan Lake Website

www.slja.net

The Sylvan Lake website provides up-to-date information on events and activity around the lake. You can also download the latest Shoreline, participate on a message board, and learn about the history of Sylvan Lake.

The updated website is ready for your use. The only place that requires a password is the Sylvan Lake Phone Directory under the **Association, Contacts** tab.

If you don't have the password, send an email message to Sylvanlakers@gmail.com and request it.

Our Resident Raptors at Sylvan Lake

Red-Tailed Hawks

Red-tailed Hawks are the most common hawks you'll see as you drive around the area. You'll often see them soaring or sitting on telephone wires/poles. They're a big bulky hawk in the family known as *buteos*. They usually eat small mammals and reptiles.



The adults have a reddish tail but the juveniles don't; their tails are dark gray with light thin bands. Other identifying marks are the belly stripe band and the dark marks on the front edge of the wings in flight. Our resident Red-tails defend their territory. During migration, you'll see them rise up to tell other Red-tails this is ours, move on.



Cooper's Hawk

The Cooper's Hawk is a woodland hawk in the *accipiter* family. They're designed to weave through trees to chase after birds which are their main prey along with reptiles and some small mammals. Sometimes it seems as if they fly like kamikaze pilots.



If your bird feeder turns quiet suddenly, it may be because a Cooper's Hawk has perched nearby looking for lunch. Cooper's Hawks have banded longer tails with a fierce looking head so if you see that in the neighborhood, odds are it's a Cooper's. The breasts of the adults have rusty streaks going side to side while the immatures have brownish streaks going up and down.



Eastern Screech Owl

I don't know if they nest here regularly but they have resided here at times. These are smaller owls that can be greyish or reddish with little "ear" tufts. Their call is a descending whinny or a low trill. This is also a night owl. They have to be careful though. If a Great Horned Owl catches them, they will eat them. Nature can be hard.

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Our Resident Raptors at Sylvan Lake

Turkey Vulture

Although they don't nest here that I know of, you can often see them flying overhead. They are a large black bird that flies with their wings in a V, a dihedral, often with a rocking motion. Sometimes the light shining off their wings makes them look almost silvery.



Other Raptors

You'll occasionally see other raptors coming through in spring or fall migration, such as one of our smallest owls, the Saw-whet Owl, or one of our biggest raptors, the Bald Eagle.

Identifying Birds by Sound or Sight

A great, free app for your smart phone with no ads is Merlin by the Cornell Ornithology Labs. It leads you through a step-by-step identification, lets you explore like a field guide, id from a photo, or identify by sound. Many experienced birders use it for identifying bird sounds which is a skill that usually takes many years to learn. If you hear birds in your backyard and wonder what they are, it can be incredibly helpful. It's not 100% but it's really good. By the way, another great app for plants, also free, is iNaturalist.

Good birding!

ATTENTION: Schwerman's 2nd & 3rd Water Subdivision!

The Schwerman's 2nd & 3rd Water Subdivision Water Board has available this year's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). This CCR includes basic information on the source of your drinking water, the levels of any contaminants that were detected in the water during 2023, and compliance with other drinking water rules, as well as some educational materials.

This report can be found on your waterboard's website at <https://sylvanlakewaterboard.gogladly.com/>. You may also obtain a free copy of the report by calling Murner C. Swanson of Swanson Water Treatment, Inc. at (847)680-1113 or you may pick one up at their office which is located at 509 E. Park Avenue, Libertyville, IL 60048.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!

The board is always looking for eager volunteers to help us maintain quality drinking water for our community. We have many important topics and projects that will greatly impact the future for our community.

If you are open to volunteering please reach out to schwerman2nd3rdwater@gmail.com to discuss how you can help in a way that meets your schedule and skillset.

ANNUAL BILLING...COMING SOON!

Please note that our annual billing will be sent in July. Be on the lookout for those invoices along with some important EPA required feedback that we need.

1. If you haven't paid for 2023/2024 invoice please ensure to do that ahead of the 2024/2025 annual billing.
2. Invoicing is going digital: Please sign up on our website <https://sylvanlakewaterboard.gogladly.com/> or email us at schwerman2nd3rdwater@gmail.com. We would like to move to email billing to save time and community funds.

Garden Club Events

Thank you to everyone for a fantastic spring!

The Egg Hunt and bake sale were a great success. This event was sure smiled on, from the weather that day to the delicious donations for the bake sale. The Bunny brought our neighborhood children over 1000 eggs! Thank you to everyone who helped with each part of the morning.



The Garden Club Spring Party was graciously hosted by Dawn Owen. Delicious food, refreshing beverages, and best of all, of course was the company that evening! What a fun time spent with neighbors old and new! Thank you to everyone for coming, spending time together, and sharing memories and ideas for the future.



We are looking forward to a summer full of fun!



The 4th of July Picnic will be held at the beach. The festivities kick off at 10am sharp with the bike and pet parade at Schwerman Park. We are delighted to be able to celebrate at the beach for the remainder of the day with lunch and beverages available for purchase with tickets from 11am - 3pm. Details have been sent out via email, posted in the Sylvan Lake Facebook group, and posted on the community bulletin boards.



The Hot Dog Social will be held on August 10th, the day of the volleyball tournament.

Venetian Night will also be lake dependent.

Keep an eye out for pop-up trivia, bingo, and margarita nights on the deck too!

Lake Update

Hello! For those of you I haven't met yet, my name is Alyssa Casey. I joined SLIA at the end of last year and am managing Lake issues. Below is a brief update on lake projects as well as some things we all can do as Sylvan Lake residents to keep our lake healthy.



Lake Projects

Sylvan Lake has 4 aerators placed throughout the lake. If you're out swimming or boating, you'll notice the bubbles on the water surface from these aerators. The aerators contribute to lake health by improving oxygen circulation in the lake, which is good for water quality and fish health. The aerators typically run from early spring through late fall. This spring, we discovered a motor that powers two of the four aerators was not functioning and needed to be repaired. Lee Dickinson and Roger Halverson ordered new parts and repaired the motor, so now all four aerators are once again up and running.

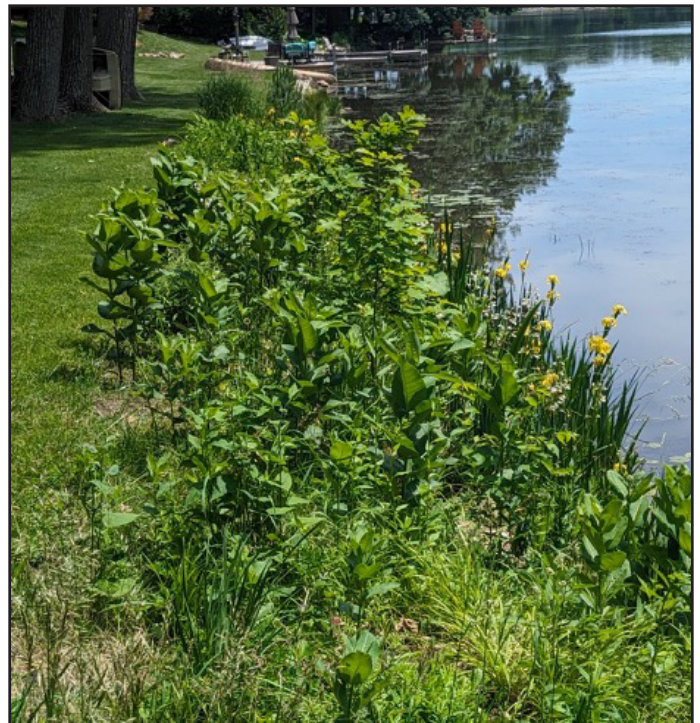
A huge thank you to Lee and Roger for volunteering their time and getting this done so quickly!

I am also working with the SLIA Board and neighborhood volunteers to plan for summer projects. These include improving shorelines along some of the common areas by adding beneficial plants that control erosion and filter runoff before it enters the lake. Also, we don't know exactly how the dam project will affect the lake's fish and aquatic plant populations. So, we are planning for possible fish restocking after the dam project, as well as

ensuring we have a good balance of plant life in the lake. Aquatic plants are necessary for a healthy lake, as they filter out harmful nutrients and support a healthy fish population. However, that doesn't mean the entire lake surface needs to be covered in plants. Lake County Health Department recommends that 30-40% of a lake's bottom (not water surface) contain rooted aquatic plants (see the link at the end of this article for more info). Having a good balance of beneficial aquatic plants means one plant species won't take over too much of the lake. Instead, we can have a balance of plant life that supports all lake activities—swimming, fishing, boating, etc.—and supports lake and wildlife health. So that is what I am working towards!

Everyone Plays a Role

While the SLIA Board works to keep the lake healthy and usable, every person who lives in Sylvan Lake has a role to play! Here are some things residents can do to help our lake stay clean and usable.



1. Be Mindful of Fertilizer Use: It's summer and everyone is working to make their yards and gardens beautiful! Excessive phosphorus in the lake is one of the factors that leads to algae on the water surface including the harmful algae blooms which require closing our beach. Please be mindful and

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only use fertilizer when needed. Consider using a phosphorus-free fertilizer. If you use a landscaping service, talk to them about minimizing or refraining from using phosphorus fertilizers. With mindful fertilizer use, it's possible to have lovely lawns and gardens and a healthy lake!

For more info on this, see: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/3594/P-Free-Fertilizers>.

2. Keep Geese Off Lawns & the Beach: You may have noticed a roped fence at the beach. This does not mean the beach is closed. You are welcome to swim at the beach! The rope fence is intended to keep geese off the beach, as goose poop is another major contributor to unhealthy levels of certain nutrients in the lake. Please do not feed the geese. If you live on the lake and have geese on your shoreline, consider putting up a simple rope or fence to deter the geese.



3. Keep Our Neighborhood Clean: Everything on our lawns, common spaces, or on our roads can eventually end up in the lake water. For this and other reasons, please clean up after your pets! Also, on garbage day, some stray trash or recycling items inevitably end up in the road. If you see trash and are able to, please pick it up. There are trash and recycling bins at Schwerman Park, Point Comfort Park, and the Beach.

4. Add Native Plants to Your Shoreline: If you live on the lake, caring for your shoreline can have a huge impact on the health of our lake. Lake County Health Department recommends a native planted buffer strip as the best option for most shorelines rather than a seawall or rock wall. A planted buffer



strip means having native plants along the first few feet of shoreline (to serve as a “buffer” between your lawn and the lake). The plant roots not only anchor the soil to prevent your shoreline from eroding, they also filter harmful chemicals out of water runoff before they enter the lake. A buffer strip doesn't need to take up your whole lawn or be very tall. There are many short, attractive plants that are good for buffer strips. I'm working with some volunteers to put together a list of tips for native buffer strips on the SLIA website. If you already have a seawall or rock wall, that's fine as those also help limit erosion. You can also combine options, for example adding a native plant buffer before your seawall or in and around your rock wall.

For more info on buffer strips, see: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/2390/Buffer-Strips>.

If you're interested in learning more, this Lake County Health Department FAQ resource covers many lake health topics including aquatic plants, geese, and native buffer strips: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4862/FAQs>.

Spring Cleanup Day



Thank you to everyone that came out to help on this spring's clean-up day and those who helped finish the remaining work on the days after.



We started on Saturday and finished everything by Wednesday. We focused on mulching the parks and beach, weeding in Wildflower Terrace, weeding and mulching at the Gilmer Entrance gardens and some much needed work in Point Comfort Park. The work we do on clean-up days saves our neighborhood thousands of dollars every year and is a great opportunity for our community members to work together.



We still have more work that needs to be done in our parks and at our playgrounds this summer, so watch for emails for working in Point Comfort, Juneau Terrace and Wildflower Terrace.

Eco-Lakers Update



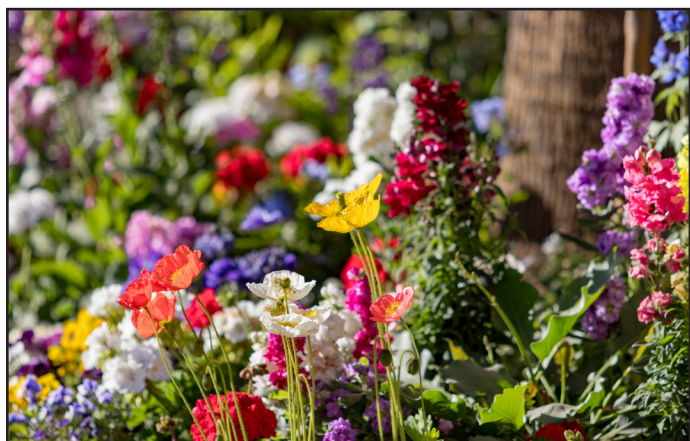
Seedling sales were a success again this year, raising over \$700 in profits to be used towards our natural areas. With the money raised, so far we have purchased 25 bushes that were planted in Hiawatha Terrace, Ravinia and Upper Maple Park.



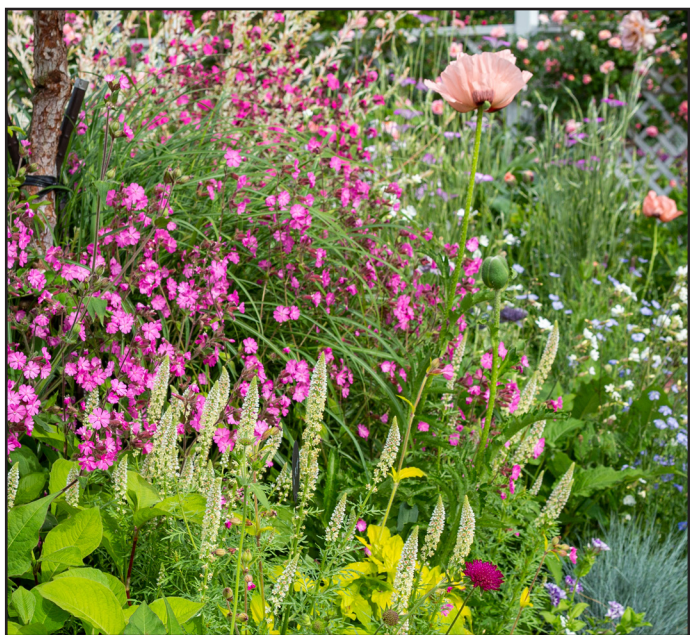
Thank you to everyone that purchased seedlings and to those who helped plant.

Sarah Owen

Wild Flower Gardens



As I have been an avid gardener here at Sylvan Lake for twenty eight years I hope this article will be of assistance to you. Over the years I have converted a very weedy and grass filled yard into full wild flower gardens and just finishing up the front yard. As most of you have lovely green lawns I have replaced all my grass into gardens. Because we are all aware of severe climate change I am doing my best on my 1/2 acre to affect change. I will not use



fertilizer, except Milorganite, all nitrogen, only water to establish new plants and without grass, no more mowing. The pollinating plants will encourage more of nature coming into my yard. Grass requires mowing, polluting the air with gas fumes, fertilizers that can pollute the lake and much more water to water our lawns, plus many more birds and insects will visit your garden. As you walk around your yard

this summer observe how you can decrease the grass footprint and assist me in making a small difference in climate change. I have a lot of wild flower books on my bookshelf which have assisted me on my journey to create more wild flower gardens for nature to enjoy. Call me to come and walk through my yard.

Mary Harroun

Sylvan Lake Board Meetings

Our volunteer SLIA board has their monthly board meetings every third Wednesday, 7:30pm at the Countryside Fire Department. Please join us to hear what's happening and being planned in our community.

SLIA Board

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
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| Vice President..... | Cliff Gartner |
| Treasurer..... | Ed Meltzer |
| Secretary..... | Jeremy Vale |
| Parks & Easements ... | Sarah Owen, Kimberly Del Bene |
| Lake | Alyssa Casey |
| Beach | Peter Lind |
| Recreation | Laurie MacKay |

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| President..... | Jennifer Scharff |
| Vice President..... | Nancy Hanson |
| Treasurer..... | Irene Flora |
| Secretary..... | Dawn Owen |

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| Debbie Pomazal | Nancy Brashear |
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