Crooked Lake

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IN GOD WE TRUST

Fall/Winter 2026

Welcome to Winter at Crooked Lake.

Winter is a great time to enjoy a warm fire and bowl of soup, or for the more ambitious – ice fishing. We hope this newsletter helps you feel connected to our lake community and fires you up for all the lake events to come.

Keeping Fall Leaves Out of the Lake.

If you still have leaves falling, The Watershed Foundation (TWF) staffer Hannah Godfrey recently posted that it is important to keep leaves out of the lake. Leaves that float into the lake may show up next summer "in the form of a mucky lake bottom and a thick mat of aquatic weeds". The leaves do "real damage to a lake ecosystem by adding nutrients and using up essential dissolved oxygen as they decompose." TWF recommends mulching the leaves when you mow. The mulched leaves are free fertilizer, providing your yard with vital nutrients. Email hannah@watershedfoundation.org with any additional questions.



Turkey Trot -All Welcome.

The Crooked Lake Social Club is sponsoring a Turkey Trot Race on November 21, 2026, starting at 10:00 a.m. There will be refreshments and finisher medals. It's not the speed but fun that matters. The start and the finish line are at the Reid/Geiger residence on Valley Avenue.

Hike the Nature Preserve.

The trail is always open. Walk the whole trail (2 plus miles) or just a short stroll. You can enter at the end of North Shore Drive or the Preserve public entrance at 1040 E 700 N just west of SR 9. Check out the new trail by the cemetery. Also, consider sending an email to our DNR Preserve Ecologist Adam Balzar (ABalzer@dnr.IN.gov) or Francie Hill (frances_hill@hotmail.com) if you want to join the Nature Preserve Steward group. Stewards walk the trails when they can, pick up trash, clip low hanging branches, and email Adam if a path is blocked by a large limb or any major concern. It's an easy and fun job. This coming year we will promote walking partners for those interested, and joint workdays to help Adam.

Thanks to Lake Association Volunteers. Opportunities Still Available.

Thanks to the many lakers who volunteered time to clean up Farm Ditch debris, plant pumpkins, etc. Several volunteer opportunities are outlined in other articles of this Newsletter, but there are more including the Maintenance Committee, Water Testing, Pumpkin growing, and Pork Sandwich fund raiser – to name a few. Send an email to Association President Phil Walker (pcw51@hotmail.com) or Francie Hill (frances_hill@hotmail.com) if you are interested.



Crooked Lake Association/Mark Calendar for June 5 Annual Meeting

What is the Lake Association? It is a public benefit corporation organized in the 1970s to restore and preserve our water quality, and to maintain the natural beauty and uniqueness of both basins of Crooked Lake. The Association is run by a Board of Directors elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting. The board meets monthly to review water quality data and possible projects, coordinate with The Watershed Foundation (TWF) and the local DNR, and to seek necessary grants. The corporation has Bylaws and is guided by written policies on directors and officers, financial safeguards, records retention, and nuisance wild animal control. The 2027 Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 5th at Big Lake Church. Let the Association President Phil Walker (pcw51@hotmail.com) know if you would like to serve as a director or just to volunteer for any lake activities.

New Social Club.

The new Crooked Lake Social Club is a success, with a great turnout for the Turtle Race, Pontoon Ice Cream Social, and Fall Family Festival so far in 2026. The purpose of the Social Club is to build lake community with shared activities for kids, singles, couples, parents, and grandparents. No big commitment of time is required if you want to help plan or volunteer for an event. The Social Club and the Lake Association do different things but fully support and work with each other.

July 3rd Pancakes and Blazing Paddles Races.



The Lake Association and The Social Club would like to announce some changes for Pancakes on the Lake (POTL). Chuck Farris has retired after about 30 years as POTL chairman (Thank you for your service, Chuck!), and we have a new location at the Reid and Geiger piers. Mark your calendar for Saturday July 3, 2027, at 9 a.m. for the pancakes, noon for the Adult Blazing Paddles (any non-mechanized watercraft) and Kids races (time TBA). July 4, 2027, is the back-up date should weather be an issue. Let any board member know if you want to volunteer.

How to Get Cool Crooked Lake Apparel and Fun Fundraiser.

Look to RUNNING AROUND on Main Street, Columbia City (260-248-1216) for cool t-shirts, sweatshirts and hats with Crooked Lake Association or Social Club logos. Stop in the store, pick out a t-shirt and a set design, or design your own logo. But to make it super easy for new and old residents to get Crooked Lake gear, please volunteer to help organize a fund raiser sale of apparel at the Annual Association Meeting on June 5, 2027. If we get 3 to 4 volunteers this should be a pretty easy project. Give Francie Hill a call (812-327-5761) and we'll get this project started.