

In our continuing effort to provide updates on our treasured natural lakes, SOLA3 is writing to you today to provide an update on what is happening with the property on the south west corner of Silver Lake where the property owners dumped 300-400 tons of fill dirt without a permit and destroyed much of the natural vegetation and wildlife habitat on the property.



In June, the owners began to remove the fill dirt based on demands from Sussex County, so we thought this matter was resolved. Sadly, it was not! Over the summer the owners repeatedly moved dirt around the site and back into the Federal Wetland and floodplain rather than removing it. SOLA3 and neighbors repeatedly called on Sussex County and the Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) to monitor the activities on the site. Several times this summer and fall, Sussex County and ACE had to revisit the site with the owners to ensure that all the fill dirt was removed from the wetlands and floodplain. On September 25th, the remaining fill dirt was finally removed and the grade returned close to its original state. The first loads of fill dirt were dumped on this property in December 2023.

During this same period, Sussex County had filed charges against the owners for violating County code and failing to comply with Sussex County's request to remove the dirt and return the land to its natural state. The County repeatedly tried to work with the owners to adhere to the County's request but to no avail. The Court hearing finally occurred on October 2nd, 2024. The property owners pleaded no contest and agreed to pay a \$7,500 fine. This was a negotiated amount as the estimated fines could have been closer to \$20,000.

In a follow up discussion with the Sussex County Planning & Zoning Director, the remaining task to be completed is for the owners to plant grass to reduce erosion. Hopefully, this will also allow for this area to return to its natural state providing a critical habitat for the wildlife that live around the lake as well as protecting the water quality of Silver Lake.



SOLA3 is working with Sussex County officials, Councilmen Schaeffer, Senator Huxtable, and Representative Schwartzkopf, and DNREC, as well as the State Attorney General's office to evaluate the validity of the deed for this property that was recorded in Sussex County by the property owners in 1993. SOLA3 is vigilantly working with Local and State officials to bring this issue to closure.

It was public action that brought this issue to light. SOLA3 and Silver Lake neighbors pursued Sussex County and State officials to act on this matter. Without your support we would not have had the resources to pursue remedial action for this property. We ask for your continued support for our efforts to resolve the remaining issues regarding this property and other issues that arise that impact the lakes' environment. If you see something that is happening around Lake Gerar, Silver Lake, or Lake Comegys that doesn't seem right, please reach out to SOLA3 at SOLA3.org or email us at saveourlakes@sola3.org or call your local officials.