



ADVOCACY POLICY

Approved by the Board of Directors on February 2, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Geneva Lake Conservancy recognizes that Walworth County's land and lake uses are constantly changing and that appropriate development is needed to ensure the county's long-term economic health.

However, as the county's population grows and development escalates in the next few decades, there will be increased pressure on our natural resources and the Geneva Lake Conservancy must help protect the environmental health of the county. We are fortunate to have support from the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission in balancing Walworth County's economic growth while protecting its natural resources.

With more than 30 municipalities in the county, it is impossible to monitor every meeting that may include development proposals and the Conservancy relies on its members, staff and board to bring to the attention of the Advocacy Committee any proposed issues or developments that could negatively impact the ecological health of our lakes and lands.

The Conservancy is well respected for its efforts to stop inappropriate development and has taken the lead in the last four decades to prevent such development projects as: Redevelopment of Yerkes Observatory (2005) by developer Mirbeau, preventing an Indoor Water Park at The Abbey Resort (19xx), stopping the expansion of the Geneva Inn (2017) through an amendment to the City of Lake Geneva Comprehensive Plan, preventing a gravel pit in the Town of Lyons (2018) and substantially limiting keyhole developments on Geneva Lake.

ADVOCACY CRITERIA

When an issue is brought to the Advocacy Committee, it shall be posted on the agenda with the source of the request noted. The Advocacy Committee will meet at least quarterly to review these issues. When decisions are eminent, the Committee may meet on an emergency basis with only 24 hours prior notice to Committee members.

The Advocacy Committee will give priority to local, state or federal decisions that could impact:

- Existing or Proposed GLC properties protected by a conservation easement, owned by the GLC or in which the GLC has other interests (i.e. Fontana Fen).

- The health or overcrowding of Geneva Lake or other Walworth County lakes.
- Proposed zoning changes that would negatively impact the local environment, including “keyhole” developments and inappropriate, high density development.
- Other proposals or developments that could negatively impact the environmental health of the County.

The Geneva Lake Conservancy will not engage in any of the following Advocacy activities:

- Those that support commercial enterprises but may consider endorsing processes or practices that have been shown to be beneficial for the environment.
- Political campaigns or endorsing candidates for public office or candidates for politically appointed offices.
- Pier length and buoy issues that do not directly relate to ecological health.
- Public policy at the local, state or federal level when such engagement does not comply with federal and state lobbying limitations and reporting requirements.
- Community land use decisions and other causes and issues that do not directly relate to the Conservancy’s mission.
- Issues which would jeopardize the Conservancy’s 501 (c)(3) non-profit tax status.
- Issues that impact private interests, unless there is a principle involved that applies to a broader set of potential stakeholders and the issue impacts our area from an environmental or density standpoint.

GLC PUBLIC STATEMENTS

The Advocacy Committee will formulate public statements on issues that fall under its mission and deliver those statements at public meetings in person or in writing. All public statements made between GLC Board meetings that do not allow time for full Board approval must be approved by both the Advocacy Chair and the Board Chair. Every effort should be made to allow the full Board to review controversial statements prior to issuing them publicly.

No Board or staff member may make statements to the public on controversial issues that appear to be endorsed by the Conservancy without permission from the Advocacy Chair and Board Chair. Press inquiries should be forwarded to the Executive Director who will consult with the Advocacy Chair or Board Chair to determine the best way to respond. Press inquiries on non-controversial issues should be handled by the Executive Director in consultation with the Advocacy Chair or Board Chair.

All public statements are to be posted on the Website after they have been released.