



Welcome to Beautiful Sunset Lake!

We hope this greeting finds you well, settled and happy with your new home or FHA lot purchase! You are now a member of the Far Hills Association! Congratulations! Along with that there is much you should be aware of. This letter will give you a general overview of what your membership entails and all that the Association does for the membership.

A little history: We are a private lake with no public access. The Association was started in the 1960's and there are currently about 340 homes included in it. We all own the lake, the Levins Hall clubhouse and the common areas including three beaches: Ripple, Lollipop and Winding Cove. There are two boat launches which are kept locked. Boat launch lock codes are available, contact the Boating Director (boating@farhillsassociation.com) if you need one. Criteria for receiving a boat ramp padlock code are: limited to 1 per household; must have completed the boating use survey; and household must have a boat(s) registered with FHA. Each spring, members are mailed member cards which should be carried when using the beaches, and parking stickers which should be visible on your vehicle when you are parked at the common areas or boat launches. If you need these, contact the treasurer at: treasurer@farhillsassociation.com

Sunset Lake is not only a wonderful body of water to fish, boat and swim in, it is a complex ecosystem made up of many different parts. When you move into the Far Hills Association neighborhood you become connected to the lake and its ecosystem. As a result, you take on responsibility to help protect the lake. Virtually all the Far Hills Association properties are part of the Sunset Lake watershed or drainage, so this is true whether or not you live directly on the lake. Since the value of our properties are closely tied to the quality of the lake and its uses, it is important for all of us to take our lake stewardship roles seriously. On our association website you will find several links about lake friendly living. Please check out this info under the Resources tab (farhillsassociation.com/resources/).

The FHA official website is FarHillsAssociation.com. You will find everything you need to know there including the link to a [New Member Registration Form](#). You can find that link in the section "Lake Life" under the heading "Are you New to Sunset Lake?" Filling out this form will ensure your contact info is accurate with the secretary, thereby allowing you to receive important communication from the Association. You will also find the Handbook which includes the Bylaws (how we run the Association), the Covenants (restrictions and property rules), Articles of Organization, and the Rules (as they pertain to boating, parking, dogs, etc.) Please become familiar with the handbook! You will also find contact information for the various departments and links to other fun stuff and pertinent information.

The Homeowners Association (HOA) dues For 2026 the annual fee is: Homeowner=\$1644, Landowner=\$916, representing a 5% increase over last year. Regular annual increases are anticipated to maintain services and to build reserves for infrastructure projects. You are billed for your dues in April, and payment is due May 1st. Your dues include your drinking water, maintenance of the Association roads and the water system. It also covers lake treatment, insurance, legal fees, common property taxes, etc. To clarify, road maintenance includes repair and paving. The town of Ashburnham is responsible for snow removal and sanding. Please note that if you have an issue with winter road maintenance, you should contact the town DPW.

The Board of Directors meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. These meetings are held virtually. Check your email notices from the Far Hills Secretary about the meetings if you wish to join in. There are 9 board members, each of whom take on different responsibilities within the Association, and a secretary and a treasurer. Elections are held at the August Annual Meeting, which is held at Ripple Beach. A community picnic follows this meeting. Board positions are normally a 3-year term. One director is voted to be President by the board. The responsibilities covered by the board are as follows:

Secretary: secretary@farhillsassociation.com The secretary is your main contact via email for the Association. If you haven't already done so, please be sure you provide your email address to the secretary. (New Member Registration Form on FHA website) Minutes of the monthly board meetings are kept and distributed to the membership via email. Spring and fall newsletters are also distributed via email from the secretary as well as any pertinent notices. If you have a concern regarding the Association, it is best to contact the appropriate board member or email the secretary, who will then forward your concern as necessary.

Treasurer: treasurer@farhillsassociation.com The treasurer provides monthly financial reports, presents the annual budget for approval in the month of March, sends payment of Association bills, prepares for an annual audit, sends out dues invoices and receives payments.

Water System: water@farhillsassociation.com Our drinking water supply is from the Ashburnham water treatment plant which services both Ashburnham and Winchendon. The Far Hills Association is on the Winchendon water line, and you should be aware that it is not fluoridated. If you have an issue with the water system, a leak, or need to shut off the water at the street, you should contact the Water Director. We are all on one meter and share the cost equally, so please do your best to conserve!

Boating: boating@farhillsassociation.com All motorized boats must be registered, both with the state and the Association. There is a registration form on the FHA website to get your boat sticker. All Member motorboats must display the Sunset Lake boating sticker; new boat stickers are issued each year so please replace the old sticker with the new when you receive in the Spring. *Things to be aware of...there is a 90 HP limit, 18-ft limit on motorboats and 24-ft limit on pontoon boats. Jet skis are not allowed! While motor boating around the lake, the general rule is to travel in a counterclockwise direction. Reasonable and safe speeds must be maintained when passing small pleasure craft. Headway speed (no wake) must be maintained in small coves, in coves marked as "No Wake Zones", or within 150 ft of the shoreline. Some of the hazardous/shallow areas are marked on the map which you can find on the website. Massachusetts boating rules are in force, and the Environmental Police do visit on occasion. Please be sure to have the required number of life jackets on board and note that children under age 12 must always wear them while on a boat that is underway. If you trailer your boat to other water bodies, please ensure that it is cleaned and free of weeds before launching in Sunset Lake; we all must avoid bringing invasive plants into the lake.*

Massachusetts has implemented a new regulation effective April 2026 requiring anyone operating a boat in MA to obtain a boating safety certificate. There are two options, either online or in person. For those born after January 1, 1989 you will be required to obtain your certificate by April 1, 2026. For those born before January 1, 1989 you have until April 1, 2028. Additionally, individuals between 12 and 15 must complete a safety course to operate a boat unsupervised, and those ages 16 and 17 must do the same for personal watercraft. If you have a boating safety certification from another state, there is a form available on the MA Environmental Police website where you can apply to have the MA requirement waived.

Fishing: social@farhillsassociation.com We are a catch and release lake! You are encouraged to get a fishing license. However, since we are a private lake, there is no license requirement. Check the FHA website for info on the summer-long fishing tournament.

Environmental: environmental@farhillsassociation.com To keep our lake healthy, regular water quality monitoring is performed and treatment is done by a professional lake treatment company. This treatment is usually done at the end of June. Notices are posted and use of the lake is restricted on that day. Please avoid using fertilizer and weed killers on your lawn; nitrogen and phosphorus will find a way to the lake and cause algal blooms. Try to limit your lawn treatment to lime only. Also a reminder: Please do not feed the ducks, and pets are not allowed on the 3 main Association beaches. Pets are allowed on Driftwood Beach (corner of Noel Dr and Christmas Tree Dr). Please be conscientious about cleaning up dog waste anywhere in our community.

Maintenance: maintenance@farhillsassociation.com Maintenance of the common properties is done as needed. There are clean-up days in the spring and fall. Notices will be sent by email looking for volunteers to help.

Dam: dam@farhillsassociation.com Please stay off the dam. Only authorized people are allowed. The lake level is lowered 2.5-3 feet around Nov 1st. This is to protect the dam structure and shorelines from ice damage and it helps efforts to control shoreline weeds. The water level is allowed to rise again after spring ice-out, generally around April 1st.

Security: security@farhillsassociation.com Members should not confront security issues. If you see a problem on our beaches or other property, you should call the police or contact the Security Director. We have been hiring security personnel to patrol the area routinely during the summer months. There are security cameras in use. Properly displaying your FHA parking tag inside your vehicles will help security identify members. Guest vehicles should display your address on a handwritten note displayed on the dashboard. Guests must have a member card with them or be with a member.

Permits: environmental@farhillsassociation.com Permits are required for new docks and moorings, as well as for use of the Association kayak racks. Long term beaching of boats is not allowed.

Legal and Insurance: legal@farhillsassociation.com Legal services are used regularly for issues that arise. FHA carries liability insurance, but homeowners are responsible for their own insurance.

Social: social@farhillsassociation.com The Social Director organizes various activities throughout the year. In past years activities have included the annual picnic, an Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Trunk or Treat, boat parades, fishing tournaments, yoga on the beach, and rentals of Levins Hall. Look for notices from the secretary about these functions. The annual meeting and picnic is normally scheduled for the second Saturday in August. We are always looking for new ideas for activities; if you have any please share them!

Roads: roads@farhillsassociation.com As noted previously, our roads are private with public access. The FHA is responsible for road repairs and paving. The Town of Ashburnham is responsible for winter plowing and sanding. Road maintenance is a major part of our budget, little by little we are doing the best that we can.

Lastly, if you plan to do any land clearing, tree-cutting, planting, building or other development on your property within 100 feet of the lake or wetlands, 200 feet from streams, or within 10 feet of the road, please note that you need to be sure to get FHA approval and any required local approvals. You should check with the Ashburnham or Winchendon Conservation Commission to make sure your plans comply with the MA Wetlands Protection Act and the Ashburnham or Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw.

Again, welcome! See you around the lake!! And remember to give the Secretary your email address!! secretary@farhillsassociation.com or use the [FHA New Member Registration Form.](#)

Gretchen Lutz and Sue Urban

Far Hills Welcome Committee
welcome@farhillsassociation.com

Please email us anytime with questions!