

# LAKE OF THE WOODS VISION PLAN

Approved by the Board  
February 1, 2003

Background – LOW is a diverse community with members holding a wide range of viewpoints about what it should be, both now and in the future. The Articles of Incorporation, Restrictive Covenants and Bylaws established an excellent foundation for our community, but have not yet been translated into a clear statement of our vision, mission, goals, and strategies to achieve those goals. Over the past 15 years, the community has recognized the need to examine itself and consider relevant conditions external to LOW proper and to plan for the distant future – build-out and beyond. To that end LOWA has undertaken a series of planning efforts: 1) a Recreational Master Plan in 1989; 2) Long Range Plans prepared yearly; 3) Member Surveys conducted in 1987, 1997 and 2002; 4) Land Use Studies in 1996 and 2001; 5) Vision Plans prepared in 1995 and 1999; and, 6) a Major Projects Study completed in 2000.

However, none of these studies is based on a consensus vision for our community, nor were they approved for implementation by the Board. As a consequence, they have not resulted in a complete, fully-coordinated action plan to implement the recommended elements. The recent Boards, with due credit to former AGM/GM Barbara Wood and the current GM, have recognized the critical nature of the overall situation and have authorized measures to create a well-conceived system to accomplish the actions necessary for the long-term welfare of this active and growing community.

Purpose – This Plan is being submitted for member comment, and after those comments have been considered, it will be approved by the LOWA Board to:

- Establish key principles vital to the future welfare of the community to guide LOWA management and members.
- Establish reasonable concepts for the long-term operation and improvement of LOW/LOWA.
- Guide the Planning Committee's preparation of the Master Plan.

Scope – The Plan consists of four major elements:

- Our Vision
- Our Mission
- Our Goals
- Strategies to achieve the Goals

Each Strategy must be supported by existing or planned regulations or an ongoing or planned resource allocation to ensure achievement of our Goals. It is important to note that individual actions to accomplish the Strategies are not included, nor are there priorities reflected in the various Strategies. Individual actions will be included in the Master Plan, which will include an integrated financial plan. The Board will provide the priorities to the Planning Committee for incorporation into the Master Plan. The GM and Board will be responsible for implementation with input from the community.

### **Our Vision**

- One of the top recreational communities in the Mid-Atlantic region.
- An environment which preserves and enhances our natural wooded character and lakes.
- High quality of life for a population diverse in age, family size and interests.
- Substantial influence on the political and business activities that affect our community.

### **Our Mission**

The mission of LOWA is to preserve and enhance property values and to contribute to the highest possible quality of life for all Lake of the Woods Association members.

### **Our Goals**—Broad areas where we will strive to:

- Preserve and enhance the natural environment.
- Maintain and upgrade our Lake of the Woods infrastructure.
- Provide amenities and facilities supporting year-round recreational and lifestyle interests of members.
- Provide a secure environment for members.
- Create strong communications with and between members.
- Provide high-quality administrative support services.
- Institute multi-year financial planning.
- Exert significant influence on county planning and development.

### **Strategies**

#### Natural Environment

- Upgrade procedures, equipment and facilities to preserve and enhance our natural environment.
- Provide adequate resources to enforce covenants and regulations governing the natural environment.
- Upgrade the appearance of all LOWA structures and grounds.
- Enhance and increase green space and natural areas.

#### Maintenance and Upgrade of Infrastructure

- Implement the comprehensive Lake Management Plan.
- Continue “Award Winning” practices for Dam safety.
- Over a period of five years, plan to expend replacement capital at least equal to the amount of depreciation for those five years.
- Review the condition and adequacy of all LOWA facilities and equipment. Establish the list of all required maintenance. Prepare a time-phased plan to eliminate any backlog by 2008.
- Implement the plans to upgrade all roads and associated drainage facilities including ditches and culverts.
- Establish and implement a plan for recurring maintenance of all LOWA buildings, roads and grounds, and equipment.
- Phase out the allocation of road fees to support the maintenance operating budget; by 2006, place all road fees into restricted reserves for the purpose of long-term upgrade of roads.
- Conduct a Reserve Study every five years of all major LOWA assets.

#### Amenities Supporting Year-Round Recreation

- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the Clubhouse area, the “center of our community,” to provide food and beverage services, enhanced parking, a community center, a fitness center and other recreational facilities that will be adequate to accommodate LOWA membership at build-out.

- Invest at least \$2.5 million in capital assets over the next three years to replace the Clubhouse Pool with a year-round pool and replace the Golf Pro Shop and Snack Bar.
- Develop and implement a plan to provide adequate facilities for our youth, especially the Nursery School and the Teen Center.
- Ensure that the lakes will be able to support: 1) water sports, 2) boating (power, sail and canoe), 3) a productive fishery, 4) public beaches, 5) boat docking for those not on the lake, 6) boat storage, and 7) marinas for launching and servicing boats.
- Establish a network of walking/biking trails easily accessible to all LOWA members.
- Explore options for providing our members with senior housing, assisted-living or long-term care with full access to LOWA amenities.
- Develop a year-round tennis capability.
- Provide an equestrian facility suitable for boarding horses, and conduct of riding lessons, horse shows, and trail rides.
- Upgrade the appearance and operations of the campground facility.
- Provide storage sites for recreational vehicles and boats.
- Explore opportunities for additional amenities.

#### Secure Environment

- Maintain the status of a “gated community” and provide adequate resources to control access, enforce regulations and support county law enforcement.
- Provide annual contribution and other support to LOW Fire and Rescue.
- Provide required resources, personnel and equipment, to implement LOWA emergency plans.
- Consider underground utilities to minimize service disruptions and dangers from downed utilities.

#### Strong Communications

- Upgrade information exchange to achieve rapid and reliable communications with and between members.
- Maintain a family of regular publications to provide information to all members.
- Expand Channel 17 capabilities to better communicate with members.
- Establish a web-based reading room.
- Explore options for new methods for member communication with the Board and Staff, and for member-to-member communication.

#### Administrative Support Services

- Establish a compensation structure and benefit package adequate to retain a highly qualified and motivated staff.
- Create a “customer satisfaction” mind-set among LOWA employees.
- Develop and implement plans to increase the use of modern technology to handle the expanding workload as our population grows.
- Establish a feedback/audit system for administrative services.
- Establish a baseline for position descriptions and compensation through a comprehensive personnel audit.

#### Financial Planning

- Funds will be generated through assessment increases to cover anticipated improvements to the amenities and infrastructure over the next five years.
- Establish a five-year financial plan as an integral part of the Master Plan and annually update the projections for revenue and expenses.
- Establish a competitive fee schedule that strives to optimize usage of existing amenities by the membership.
- Plan to invest at least \$10 million in capital assets over the next ten years.
- Explore options for periodic payment of assessment in lieu of lump sum payment.

- Maintain a Replacement Reserve balance of at least \$500,000.
- Seek new sources of revenue and ways to increase current sources.

Influence on External Development

- Provide input concerning all development in the watershed of the lakes, in the Route 3 corridor, and all property adjacent to LOW.
- Expand political base by increasing LOW size and population.
- Seek greater representation in local political bodies.
- Seek opportunities to control areas adjacent to LOW, either through incorporation or joint development agreements.