

The Early Years

Hide-A-Way Hills was founded in 1961. The original developer was Hide-A-Way Hills Inc. whose managing partner was Jedo Estates, Inc. (same owner, different corporation). Hide-A-Way Hills Inc. controlled the development and the facilities of Hide-A-Way Hills until 1973.

In 1965, construction began on the dam for the Lake of the Four Seasons by C.M. Luburg Construction Company and Ken Jewells & Associates, engineering firm. The dam was completed in 1966 at a cost of half a million dollars. It contained 437,000 cubic yards of dirt which, if placed in a line 12" high and 12" wide, would extend 2,235 miles or approximately the distance from Columbus, Ohio to Seattle, Washington.

Articles of Incorporation were submitted and approved by the State of Ohio on the 28th day of September 1972. On that day was born Hide-A-Way Hills Club, a corporation not for profit. Although, at that time, the "Club" had no control over the operations of the "Hills" or how the assessment dollars were spent, members, with the leadership of their Board of Trustees, continued to reach out for more control of their own destiny.

Like many land developments, Hide-A-Way Hills Club was not without its problems. Sales people working for the developers on a commission basis made promises to sell lots that were ridiculous. For example, promises were made for paved roads, artesian wells, lots with no snakes, a sauna under the pool, central sewers, a shopping mall, and a teen center. Problems also occurred within the management, operations and finances of the Club. Fortunately, Hide-A-Way Hills Club was consistently judged to be free of blame or responsibility for the actions of the developer.

Many members worked diligently for long, hard hours for the benefit and well-being of the "Hills." Special notice should be taken of the Board of Trustees and other members who, during the early seventies, had the vision, wisdom and common sense to initiate the takeover of the "Hills."

A promise was made by Hide-A-Way Hills, Inc. that eventually all assessment dollars would be spent for the benefit of the members and facilities, and that an accounting would be given to the "Club" for the same. They promised that eventually this would lead to complete control of the "Hills" by the members.

A negotiation committee was formed; after many days and nights of negotiations, on February 21, 1973 an "Article of Agreement" was signed by Hide-A-Way Hills, Inc. (developer) and Hide-A-Way Hills Club (the membership) where the members assumed ownership, management, and the remaining debts of the "Hills" so they could now manage the "Hills" with their own assessment dollars.

On May 6, 1973, at a special membership meeting, a Code of Regulations was voted on and approved by the members as a guideline in governing themselves. Negotiations continued for

Hide-A-Way Hills, Inc. to transfer title of all common property within the boundaries of Hide-A-Way Hills to Hide-A-Way Hills Club. The transfer was finalized and the “Club” received the deed to the common property which totaled hundreds of thousands of dollars. It was time to go back to the negotiation table.

After much negotiation, proposals and counter-proposals, Hide-A-Way Hills, Inc. and the mortgage holders agreed to cancel all mortgages and liens on the common property if the membership would buy, or find buyers, for enough remaining lots to total \$150,000. The members again worked hard, and on February 10, 1974, bought, or found buyers for, not only the goal amount of \$150,000, but for 10,000 more.

With the “Club” owning all common property and facilities free and clear, collecting and disbursing its own assessment dollars, and with no developer or sales force to contend with, the members began to look at the “Hills” as their own. Their first concern was survival and to do this, money was needed. On December 8, 1974, at a special membership meeting, the members voted to increase their assessment from \$15.00 per month to \$20.00 per month effective January 1, 1975.

The 1990s

In 1991, the membership voted to approve a special road assessment to pay for applying chip and seal to the main roads to control the dust.

Needed repairs to the older recreational facilities caught up with the “Club” in 1992 through state dam inspections and county pool inspections. The membership voted to approve a special assessment of \$300 to make the needed repairs.

In 1993, the “Club” installed a microbrewery as an addition to the Lodge. The brewery and equipment were paid for with member donations. It was equipped to produce 900 gallons of beer a month. The beer is served at the Lodge Restaurant, Clubhouse and is sold in half-gallon containers for carryout.

Hide-A-Way Hills Club is operated by a nine-member Board of Trustees. This Board is elected by the membership at the annual meeting held the third Sunday in August.

The Board of Trustees has control of all the business, funds and property of the Club. They, in turn, appoint a five-member Management Committee to guide and control the operations, maintenance and improvement of the Club’s common properties using assessment funds levied by the Board. Both Board and Management members serve without compensation.

The rights and responsibilities of all property owners of Hide-A-Way Hills are covered by the protective covenants of their deed. These rights and responsibilities are covered by the General Code of Regulations. The Code of Regulations was approved by the membership for self-governing and can only be amended by a two-thirds vote of the membership.

The Hide-A-Way Hills Club Rules control the use of the Club facilities by its members and are authorized in the recorded covenants. The Board has the authority to adopt rules and make additions, deletions and corrections to all rules.

The 2000's

In 2003, the 54-acre Conner property including a three-bedroom house and storage building was offered for sale. The location of this land was important to the Hills because the property was surrounded on three sides by HAH member lots. It also contained some of the highest land elevations in the area. This land had previously not been available for purchase. The potential for other outside entities to subdivide or develop a business concept at odds with the Club was significant. Having control over the development of land in the heart of HAH was critical. The Board of Trustees made an offer to purchase the 54 acres which the seller accepted. The sale of the land closed in March 2004. The area came to be known as "Area 54."

Absentee voting was approved at the 2005 Annual Meeting. Members may request an absentee ballot no earlier than 45 days prior to the meeting and no later than 25 days prior to the meeting. The ballots are then mailed to members. Members must be current on assessments to vote by absentee ballot or at the meeting.

In 2007, at the annual meeting, the membership voted to annex the house and approximately two acres of Area 54 into Hide-A-Way Hills allowing future owners of the house and land to become members of Hide-A-Way Hills. In 2011, the house and accompanying acreage was sold.

In the spring of 2011, a group of HAH members started an organic garden in Area 54 on approximately one acre. Their first year was not optimal except for feeding deer who continuously broke through the fence to enjoy the produce. The Garden Committee then raised funds to put up a 10-foot tall fence in 2012 which succeeded in keeping deer out of the garden.

Hide-A-Way Hills celebrated its 50th Anniversary July 8-17, 2011. A 50th Anniversary committee worked with all the other HAH committees and planned a fun-filled week of activities for all ages. An art show started the festivities off along with taped interviews from long-time members remembering HAH's early years. HAH artists opened their studios for members to view their original works of art too.

Other events planned by the committees included adult and children's golf scrambles, a boat parade, pony rides and a tennis party. A band for the teens and special music at the Chapel in the Pines was also planned. There were euchre and bingo nights. The 10-day celebration ended with the annual Dam Jam on Saturday night and a poker run and band on Sunday. The 50th Anniversary Celebration was for all members, young and old, allowing them to come together and celebrate 50 years of life and living in the great community of Hide-A-Way Hills.

A new off-road vehicles committee was formed in 2012 to address improvements to the off-road riding area and provide a safe and fun riding area adjacent to the airstrip.

In 2016, a disc golf course was added in the woods along the southern part of Area 54.

In September 2013, sediment traps were installed at the north end of the LOFS to reduce the flow of silt into the lake. A special assessment of \$200 per member unit was approved by members at the 2013 annual meeting.

In 2014, the Sheets Road property, with a three-bedroom home, was offered to HAH to purchase. On August 17, 2014, at the Annual Meeting, the membership authorized the Board of Trustees to purchase the 30.2- acre property. The area is for hiking, horseback riding and quiet recreational use. In a contest among the members, Paul Clouse chose the name "The Reserve at Hide-A-Way Hills" for the property.

On October 5, 2014, the meadow at the top of the property was named "Harcum Park" in a dedication ceremony recognizing Dave and June Harcum. The Harcums were honored for their generosity and long-time support of HAH. In appreciation of this honor, the Harcums generously donated funding towards a shelter and other amenities for the Park.

Hide-A-Way Hills works with ODNR to make sure our dams are safe. In autumn 2015, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources approved plans to repair the Lake of the Four Seasons (LOFS) dam. The plan was estimated to cost \$2.7 million. This design was to repair slippage that had occurred on the dam.

In January 2016, the 66 2/3 Group, a group of interested Club members, was formed to ensure the passage of the special assessment that would be needed to fund the repair. It was their belief that the LOFS had great impact on the value of homes and the community. At the April 10, 2016 Special Membership Meeting, the Membership resoundingly approved a Special Assessment of \$3,950 per account by an 85% majority.

George J. Igel & Company of Columbus, Ohio was chosen to do the project and work began in May 2016. The project design consisted of rebuilding the dam by excavating and then solidly repacking the soil. The dam's crest and shoreline were moved 70 feet downstream and made steeper. A new emergency spillway was constructed and the lake drain was replaced. The approved design plans were developed for the project by the Lancaster engineering firm of 2LMN, Inc.

The planning stage cost the community an additional \$300,000. The final LOFS update to the members on October 21, 2016 stated that the project has been finished on time and on budget. After three years with no boating on the LOFS, members looked forward to the 2017 boating season.

While the lake's water levels were lowered, in November 2016, the Lake of the Four Seasons had 50-years-worth of silt removed from its north end near the north docks and north park

area. The silt had resulted in extremely shallow water which inhibited boaters' access to this area. This action, combined with the addition of sediment traps in 2013, have enabled boaters to use the north end of the LOFS.

TODAY

Hide-A-Way Hills consists of approximately 1,680 acres; approximately 530 acres are common property. There are roughly 700 homes. Of these, it is estimated that approximately 1/3 house year-round residents.

According to historical records as of 2004, the Club was averaging about 15 new homes per year. Prior to that, and likely due to the economy, the number of new homes in the 1980's ranged between eight and 10 new houses per year. The biggest building year was 2009 with 26 new homes built followed by 1992 with 18 new homes.

More recently, new homes built/permits issued totaled 4 in 2016, 5 in 2017 and 10 as of September 2018.

The number of Club lots sold included 10 in 2016, 15 in 2017, and 3 as of September 2018 (with several prospects underway.)

There is a new member initiation fee, a monthly assessment fee and annual road assessment fee. Hide-A-Way Hills Club Rules, Code of Regulations, Deed Restrictions, Building Code and Permit Applications are available at the Club Office and on the website.

The facilities that are maintained for use by the members and their guests with assessment monies include the golf course, the clubhouse, five lakes, dining lodge and Great Room, swimming pool, beach, an amphitheater, boat docks, shelter house, swimming pool, a barn with stables and riding ring, tennis (including pickleball) and basketball courts, air strip, picnic areas, organic garden, the Chapel in the Pines, ~~softball field~~, playground, trap range, off-the-road vehicle track, disc golf, 30-plus miles of private roads, and 24-hour security.

The spirit and engagement of our many volunteers make Hide-A-Way Hills a uniquely vibrant community. Our many volunteers serve on 23 committees and through a variety of other ways. They raise funds to improve physical aspects of the community and to provide entertainment, artistic, spiritual, and wellness opportunities for the benefit of all. They also devote their time, talent, energy, and expertise toward advancing important attributes of a civil, safe, connected, diverse, resilient, and active community. Without our volunteers, Hide-A-Way Hills would be a much different place to live.