



## **WLA RULES UPDATE 2026**

In response to widespread concerns regarding lake properties that may be used for commercial short-term rental, the WLA board is enacting rule changes clarifying access privileges to the lake and beach to protect the private status of the lake and safeguard water quality.

More than a century ago, Winans Lake was deemed a private, non-navigable water body in three separate Michigan Supreme Court cases and has been managed as such since then. Thus, the LGCC/WLA as owners/administers of Winans Lake have the right and, by deed, the responsibility to control access to this private property for the benefit of its members.

By deed restriction and rule, only WLA/LGCC members and their guests may have access to the lake. Historically, the WLA/LGCC has considered a guest to be someone who has a social or familial relationship with a WLA member (i.e. friends and relatives) versus members of the general public who may have some kind of commercial or organizational relationship. Activities that have been previously disallowed under the guest rule include guided fishing, swimming lessons, diving lessons and other similar instruction or clubs not organized or sanctioned by the WLA/LGCC. Essentially, any activity that involves access to the lake by the general public, whether for compensation or not, has been disallowed historically.

It is the position of the WLA/LGCC that access to the lake by short-term rental tenants constitutes a commercial, public, pay-for-access use of the lake that is inconsistent with the character and history of the lake and was never intended nor allowed under the rules. Allowing frequent access by those who have no long term vested interest in the lake jeopardizes the private status of the lake, threatens water quality, complicates rule enforcement and degrades the overall quality of the lake community.

Accordingly, while additional rule changes are under consideration to address these and other issues, the WLA board in coordination with LGCC and legal counsel passed the following rule changes and clarifications effective 11/13/2026:



***"WLA members may allow a guest to access the lake no more than ten (10) times in any one calendar year. Guest privileges do not extend to those who have a short-term rental or other commercial relationship with the member. Tenants of qualified property with leases of twelve (12) months or longer shall have lake privileges".***

The current official set of rules can be found here: <https://winanslake.org/rules/>

As always, the WLA board is interested in member feedback regarding this and all other lake issues.

WLA Board

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#### **WLA Board Members**

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