

A Brief History of Lake Pinehurst

Written by Mike Sanders

Edited by Bob Kinelski

In 1963, Leonard Tufts and his father, Allen (son of James Walker Tufts, founder of Pinehurst), purchased 65 acres of land that was then considered part of Jackson Hamlet. This parcel included the land that is now known as "Tufts Point." The parcel extended west to where the West Point Villas now exist, and ran south to a marshy area where the dam and a small marina were constructed in 1972. Most of the original tract is now under the lake. Albert, an ardent fisherman, built a small dam between Tufts' Point and the site where the West Lake Condos were built, and created a farm pond in which he stocked bass and bream. By the late 1960's, the Tufts corporate entity, Pinehurst Inc., had made an agreement to sell the resort property to the Diamondhead Corporation, and the sale was consummated in December, 1970.

The original structure on Tufts' Point was owned by a gentleman who used it as a clubhouse for hunting and playing cards with his friends, and in 1963 it became the first dwelling that Len Tufts and his wife had on the site. They loved the layout, with its large stone fireplace and lodge-like ambiance (a picture that now resides in the Tufts Archives shows the rustic beauty of the home). Unfortunately, within three or four years the wooden structure was invaded by termites, and had to be torn down. Len Tufts and his wife then built a solid stucco home with a red tile roof in the summer of 1970 that exists to this day, (modified somewhat by subsequent owners). Len and his wife, having been approached by Diamondhead Corporation several times through the years to sell the land for the creation of a lake, reached a gentleman's agreement with the Diamondhead Corporation sometime in the early 70's. The agreement allowed them to stay on the point until 1973, after which they relinquished their rights and sold the property.

By the end of 1973, the newly named Lake Diamond was filled with water provided by the hundreds of springs that populated the area, and a small tributary known as Horse Creek. If you were to place an overlay of Horse Creek atop a photograph of the lake as we now know it, the western branch of the creek would enter near the middle finger of the lake, not too far from the intersection of Burning Tree and Lake Shore Drive. The east branch would enter the lake from the 9th hole of Course #5, near the buildings that are affectionately known as the "tree houses."

There were many beavers that lived in the area. These intrepid builders erected a dam at one end of the farm pond near what is now known as Westlake Point. They migrated up and down Horse Creek, all the way to what is now known as Clarendon Gardens. Much to the chagrin of current homeowners, whose crepe myrtle trees, rose bushes and other foliage often fall prey to the beavers' incessant gnawing, the beaver population is doing quite well and enjoying our lovely lake.

Much of the land that eventually became the northern and eastern parts of the lake was contributed by Pinehurst Incorporated. Currently, we think of the areas north and east of the lake as primarily a development of homes, until you cross Rt. 5 and see some businesses, the Quail Haven assisted living facility and the US Post Office on Blake Boulevard. Back in the 1940's and 50's, however, this entire area consisted of a large dairy farm, known as Pinehurst Dairy, which was one of the state's largest milk producers. The pastures for the dairy extended all the way down the hill to the northeastern side of what is now Lake Pinehurst. The dairy closed in the late 50's, and pine trees were planted throughout the pasture land.

In 1982, Citibank obtained the Pinehurst Resort, including the lake, from the bankrupt Diamondhead Corporation, and subsequently sold all of Pinehurst to ClubCorp in 1984. Shortly thereafter, the lake was christened Lake Pinehurst.

In its current configuration, Lake Pinehurst consists of approximately 211 acres and 28,000 feet of shoreline. In addition to creating an area for premium priced building lots, the lake was also designed to be an aquifer for the original courses (#1-#5). Water is pumped to holding ponds on the courses from which irrigation systems water the courses as necessary. The system has the capability to pump up to one million gallons of water per day.

Sources:

Leonard Tufts – Son of Allen Tufts and grandson of James Walker Tufts (the founder of Pinehurst)

Jerry Slade – Former president of Diamondhead Corporation