

Lake Washington Sailing Club

West Sacramento, California



History of Lake Washington Sailing Club

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Lake Washington Sailing Club (LWSC) was formed in September 1934, when A.A. Saville and several other Sacramento-area sailors realized that Lake Washington would be a better place for them to sail than the Sacramento River, which has strong currents that make it less than ideal for small boat sailing. The club was organized by Saville as an outgrowth of his work with the sea scouts. Before organizing LWSC, Saville was commodore of the Sacramento District of Sea Scouts. Many of the club's founding members, including Saville, were employed at the Southern Pacific Company. LWSC members built the first clubhouse in October 1935, which was located on the west side of the lake, north of the current UC Davis rowing facility.



Lake Washington itself has changed dramatically since the club was founded. Prior to construction of the Port of West Sacramento, Lake Washington was a several-mile long natural lake which stretched from the eastern end of the Yolo Causeway almost to the present day location of Club Pheasant. Over the years the lake has been filled in and divided up into sections, but remnants of the original lake still exist.

[Comparison of Lake Washington in 1937 and 2010.](#)



LWSC held its first regatta on July 4th, 1936, beginning a long tradition of sailboat racing at the club. In 1938, LWSC joined the Small Boat Racing Association of Northern California (SBRANC) and began competing regularly against other sailing clubs, including Clear Lake Yacht Club, Corinthian Yacht Club, Ionic Sailing Club (now Stockton Sailing Club), Lake Merritt Sailing Club, Richardson Bay Yacht Club and San Francisco Yacht Club. The first major regatta hosted by LWSC was the 1938 SBRANC spring regatta.

The Snipe, a popular one-design dinghy designed in 1931, was the primary boat sailed in the early days of the club. N.H. Lund, a founding member of the club, designed an 11-foot dinghy called the Bug, which was also popular with club members. In the 1940s, International 14s and El Toros joined the Snipe as boats popular with club members. The club continued to grow through the 1940s and 50s, hosting regattas with up to 90 boats in the 1950s. An interesting video of sailing at the lake in 1953 is available at the following link (sailing footage starts at 4:08): https://archive.org/details/casacsh_000341.

Snipes and El Toros on Lake Washington in the 1950s



The 1950s and early 1960s brought major changes to Lake Washington. Construction of the Port of Sacramento was approved in the 1946 Rivers and Harbors Act. Construction of the port and ship channel began in 1949 and continued through the 1950s. As part of the port construction project, Lake Washington was turned into the turning basin of the Port of Sacramento and a deep water ship channel was dredged to connect the lake to the Sacramento River Delta near Rio Vista. LWSC was able to continue sailing in the original Lake Washington until 1958, but construction eventually forced the club to leave its original location. LWSC held events on Lake Natoma and Lake Folsom in 1959 and 60. In 1961, after construction of the port and deep water ship channel was complete, LWSC members resumed sailing on Lake Washington, and the current clubhouse was built in 1962.

As part of the port project, a barge canal was also constructed to connect the turning basin to the Sacramento River near Miller Park. The barge canal was intended to be used by barges carrying rice and grain down the Sacramento River from the upper Sacramento Valley. To get from the turning basin to the river, a vessel passed through the Stone Locks. In the 1960s and 70s, LWSC members participated in cruises through the locks to Discovery Park and other points on the Sacramento River. The barge canal and locks did not receive enough usage to justify the operation and maintenance cost, and the locks were permanently closed in 1987.

A notable event in the more recent history of LWSC was the visit of two whales to the port in 2007. In May 2007, a female humpback whale and her calf entered San Francisco Bay and eventually swam up the deep water ship channel to the Port of Sacramento. The two whales spent six days at the port, after which they returned to the ocean.



Although the people and boats sailed have changed since its founding, LWSC members have never lost their focus on the enjoyment of small boat sailing. Currently, Lasers, Sunfish, Lidos, windsurfers, and Thistles are popular boats that are raced and sailed at LWSC, and club members continue the tradition of hosting and competing in regattas throughout Northern California. LWSC members' love for harnessing the power of the wind remains unchanged and will continue for many years to come.

Below is a Partial List of Past LWSC Commodores

- 1934-7: Norman Ford
- 1938: A.A. (Alfred) Saville
- 1939: Ben Butler
- 1940: M.L. Ballard
- 1941: Edward Anderson
Noel Walsh
Henry Duensing
E.V.E. Harris
- 1947: Eugene Williams
- 1948: Jack Lovell
- 1950: Dewitt Nelson
- 1951: Rod Stebbins
- 1952: Ken Murray
- 1953: Daniel Buckley
- 1954: Charles Shalz
- 1955: Donald McDonald
- 1956: Louis DeWitt
- 1957: Chris R. Jones, Jr.
- 1958: E.B. (Bodie) Aubery

1959: Bill Hyde
1960: Fred Hawley
1961: Wayne Brown
1965: John Burdette
1966: Robert Loomis
1971: Warren Johnson
1972: Lewis Terry
1975: George Reiner
1976: Bill Butler

198?: Ken Bucher

19?? Dan Clark
19?? Ryan Schofield

1996: Fred Turner

2004: Steve Fishman
2005: Steve Fishman
2006: Ryan Schofield
2007: Richard Leijonflycht
2008: Richard Leijonflycht
2008: Stephen Jacobs
2009: Stephen Jacobs
2010: Ryan Schofield
2011: Ryan Schofield
2012: Ryan Schofield
2013: David Potter
2014: David Potter
2015: David Potter
2016: Rich Glovin
2017: Rich Glovin
2018: David Potter
2019: Janyne Reckner
2020: Janyne Reckner

