



CRYSTAL LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 89 Beulah, Michigan 49617

Phone: 231-882-4001 Email: info@crystallakewatershed.org

**CRYSTAL LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION FILES LAWSUIT
AGAINST BENZONIA TOWNSHIP AND SUNKISSED HILLS, LLC**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2024 (Beulah, MI)

Crystal Lake & Watershed Association (CLWA) a non-profit organization, has filed a Complaint in Benzie County Circuit Court against Benzonia Township Officials and the Developer and Homeowners' Association of the Sunkissed Hills Residential Community. The Lawsuit claims that the Sunkissed Hills project violates the Benzonia Township Zoning Ordinance and the Michigan Environmental Protection Act (MEPA).

The Complaint alleges that the Developer applied for land use permits for 8 large homes located in the Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay District and that Township Officials approved the permits without having viewed the site and without applying the environmental protections in the Zoning Ordinance or MEPA. It also alleges that the Developer clear cut the property, excavated steep slopes and filled in regulated wetlands in violation of the Zoning Ordinance and MEPA. The Complaint alleges that significant erosion on the property started immediately and caused environmental damage, and to this day silt and sedimentation from erosion continues to pollute, impair and destroy the wetlands, the Betsie Valley Trail and the lake.

The Complaint requests Injunction Relief which would require Benzonia Township Officials to enforce the Zoning Ordinance, and the Sunkissed Hills Defendants to install permanent erosion control measures, restore and remediate damaged wetlands on site, and protect the surrounding recreational and natural resources.

In addition to the 8 land use permits for the homes, the Township Defendants approved a very long private road over steep slopes and recently approved additional land uses on the site without applying the Environmental Provisions or the Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay provisions in the Zoning Ordinance. It is believed that the Sunkissed Hills Developer has plans to build an additional 7 homes on the property, and CLWA has requested the Court to Order that any further development on site be in strict compliance with local zoning laws and State environmental protection laws.

CLWA is a Michigan non-profit organization whose purpose is to preserve and protect Crystal Lake and its watershed. For more information on the CLWA visit its website: www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org

**For more information, contact:
Kristyn Houle, Attorney for CLWA at: 231-932-1023**

"Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come."