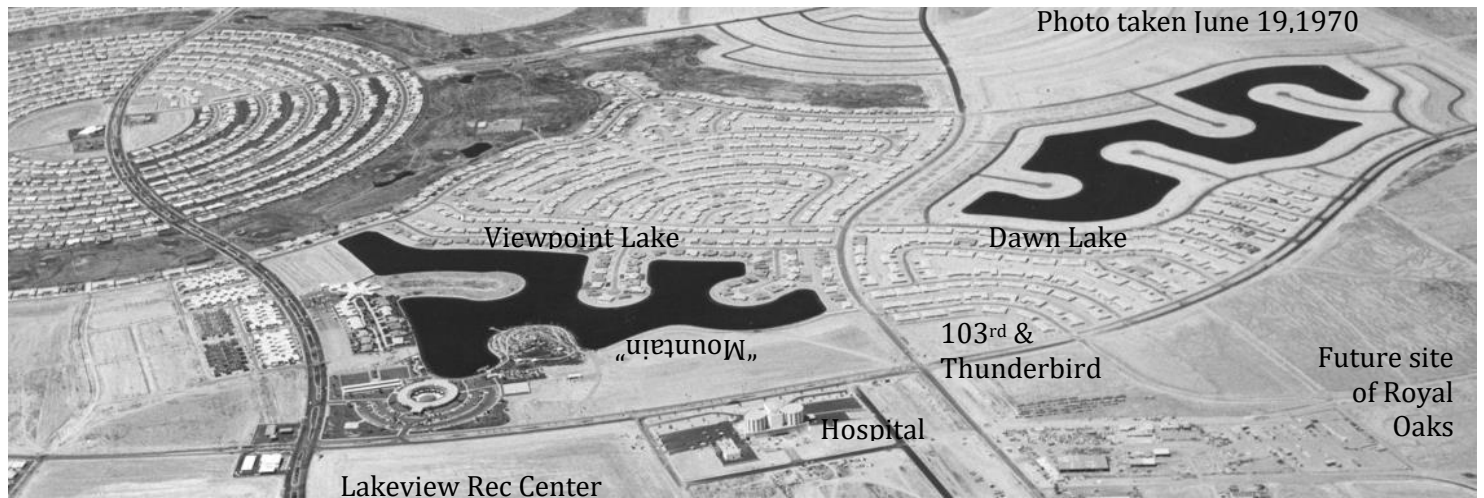


A lake of their own – little-known Dawn Lake *Signs of Sun City's Past by Ed Allen*

Sun City crossed Grand Avenue to begin Phase 2 in 1969, and the new development was unlike anything in Arizona! First of all, it featured a lake – the first in a residential subdivision in Arizona. On the south shore would be a “mountain” park with beautiful vistas and a tall waterfall. There would be new model homes with two-car garages, patios and atriums. And most distinctive were the circles that appeared in various design forms. All of this commanded a great deal of attention.



The fact a second lake was being created just a few blocks away went largely unnoticed. This lake would lack the community amenities of Viewpoint Lake (VL), and be a private lake owned by the residents of the homes around it. Named Dawn Lake (DL), it was slightly larger and would have 143 homes compared to 81 on Viewpoint Lake.

Viewpoint Lake would serve as a reservoir for watering of nearby Lakes West Golf Course; Dawn Lake for Lakes East. Water for the first lake originally came from a well located at Sunland while Dawn Lake's water came from a well owned by the RCSC and located next to Michael's Restaurant on 103rd.

The aerial view above shows how Dawn Lake winds around four peninsulas. Originally, the northern two of these, Lake Shore Point and Driftwood Point, stretched further into the lake. As excavation proceeded, the two points were each cut back four lots, making the lake wider around them.

We know that earth removed to create Viewpoint Lake was used to create the “mountain” on the south shore, and to build the mound that Boswell Hospital sits on. But where did the earth from Dawn Lake go? While some may have been used around the hospital, most was trucked east on Thunderbird Blvd. to the area between 94th Ave. and the river. That land sloped gradually to the riverbed and was being raised and leveled for development.

Within a few years of its creation, Dawn Lake had a weed problem and a solution other than chemicals was sought. Winn Winkyaw, who had supervised 1300 miles of canals for the Salt River Project, was brought in to manage the lake and recommended the use of fish to control the weeds. Aeration was added for the benefit of the fish, and as a result, fishing for bass, bluegills, catfish and tilapia has become a popular activity. And the cleaner water makes swimming possible.

As might be expected, those living on the lake own a variety of watercraft: Pontoon boats, kayaks, sailboats, and paddleboards. Boats are limited to 16' in length, electric motors and speeds of 5 mph. Decorating boats for the Christmas boat parade is a popular annual activity. Two pair of resident swans and five distinctive fountains make Dawn Lake a beautiful place to live year-round!

