



## Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

PO Box 55 308-B Lake Street

Roscommon, MI 48653

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Office Hours: M, W & Th from 9 am - 2:00 pm.

*To Protect, Preserve and Enhance the Quality of Higgins Lake and Its Surrounding Watershed*

### Ice, Ice Baby-An Unscientific Study

By Herb Weatherly

#### Definitions

1. The lake is frozen when there is ice shore to shore and it doesn't get broken up by the wind
2. Ice off (thaw) is when there are no longer ice cakes in the water, but there may be some pushed up on the beach.

Freeze	Thaw	Snow Total
1/19/2006	4/2/2006	45 1/4
1/14/2007	4/1/2007	44 3/4
1/3/2008	4/19/2008	52 7/8
12/17/2008	4/19/2009	79 1/4
1/7/2010	4/1/2010	22
12/21/2010	4/19/2011	60 5/8
1/14/2012	3/21/2012	46 1/8
1/21/2013	4/30/2013	44 7/8
12/16/2013	4/26/2014	54 3/4
1/10/2015	4/21/2015	29 3/4
1/19/2016	3/30/2015	49 1/2
1/7/2017	4/9/2017	46 1/4
12/27/2017	TBD	TBD



*Point Detroit – Aerial Photo by Eagle Eye Aerial Imaging, LLC*

#### President's message

Your HLPOAA Board is committed to effective and member-driven actions which demonstrate transparency, fiscal responsibility, and accountability. Numerous positives include:

- HLPOA Bylaws revisions which include yearly audit/review of financial statements, new election rules to ensure fair and timely director nominations and elections, and a new member definition to ensure voting integrity
- A change to accrual accounting, subsequently endorsed by our professional CPA firm
- Minutes with financial reports posted monthly
- Reenergizing the board committee system to encourage the involvement of non-board members on committees
- Developing and following member-driven and passed policies, including lake level, environmental, and marina policies

*Dedicated to preserving the quality and beauty of Higgins Lake,*

*Charlene Cornell*



SAVE THE DATE  
HLPOA Annual Meeting  
July 21, 2018,  
Roscommon High School Auditorium

## Environmental Committee Report

The Roscommon High School student water sampling and analysis project for this summer at Higgins Lake has begun. About forty students from Chuck Schepke's Chemistry I and II classes met with John Blizzard of Raven Analytical Laboratory to discuss the proposed program. Those students deciding to participate will receive safety training and test method certification for generating EPA approval level data. Once certified, the students will be collecting samples and doing chemical and biological analyses in Raven's facilities under the supervision of Chuck and John and other Raven personnel.

Four sampling cycles at a dozen or so sites around the lake are envisioned for this program. Samples will be taken soon after ice out in the spring, after Memorial Day weekend, after Independence Day, and after Labor Day weekend. The idea being to see how population pressures during the summer season affect the lake's environmental health.

The funding to support this program is shared between the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association, the Higgins Lake Foundation, and Raven Laboratory. The data collected by the students will be organized by them and presented to the funding organizations and at the fall scientific meeting of the Midland Chapter of the American Chemical Society.

Another program of significant importance is being launched to help prevent the introduction of the New Zealand Mud Snail into the lake. This destructive alien invasive species has been found in the waters of both the Manistee and the Au Sable river systems. An environmentally safe method for decontaminating waders, canoes and kayaks for example, used both in these waters and in Higgins Lake has been found. Preparations are under way make the treatment widely available from local sources around the lake. More information on this program will be provided soon.

Virkon A is concentrated disinfectant powder that when mixed with water forms a powerful cleaning and disinfecting solution with efficacy against fish viruses, bacteria, fungi, and molds. Supplies of this disinfectant powder will be available in the Higgins

Lake area by about mid-April. The powder will be sold in the size that is required to make 1 gallon of useful spray which should be enough for motors and boats up to about 18 feet in length. The spray is useful for any object that is used in lake or stream water to prevent the transfer of fish viruses, bacteria, fungi, or molds. This powder has the support of the DNR. The powder disintegrates in water within about 48 to 72 hours and thus does not become an ecological problem in the lake or stream. The powder will be available from the office of the HLPOA at 308 Lake St. in Roscommon.

Fred Swinehart and Bob McKellar

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## Boat Wash Update

Members of the Department of Natural Resources Park and Recreation Department (DNRPRD), Higgins Lake Foundation (HLF), and Higgins Lake Property Owners Association (HLPOA) have been meeting every two weeks since October 2017. The goal of the task force has been to develop a program that will prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) into Higgins Lake. To initiate this program, the DNRPRD funded \$75,000 in December of 2017 to be used for boater education and staffing of boat washes during the 2018 boating season.

This program will continue to evolve over the years.

### FUNDING FOR AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION PROGRAM:

Anticipated funding for the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Project on Higgins Lake will be allocated from the General Operation Budget of the DNRPRD. The application for monies to run the day-to-day operations and for construction projects is termed a Call for Projects request. Funding for 2019 boat washes and other projects will be submitted in July 2018, and the decision to approve or deny the requested funds will be made in late October 2018. If approved, the engineering for the project will occur in 2019. Once the project is engineered, it will be sent out for bids, with construction to be done in



2020. It is a two-year process from the time that a project is submitted for approval to the time that it is built.

**UPDATES FOR THREE DNR/PRD LAUNCH SITES:**

*South Higgins Lake State Park (SHLSP)*

The boat wash currently in place was built in 2012 with funding from the Higgins Lake Foundation. At the time of construction, a drain was put in place to handle the waste water from the boat washes. The drain was permitted by the MDEQ to handle 600 gallons of water a day from boat washing. The system is estimated to use eight gallons per boat, which is 75 boats per day. Therefore, only high-risk boats will be washed. A high-risk boat is one which has been on a lake other than Higgins Lake within the past 10 days. It is estimated that on a busy Saturday in the summer 400 boats may be launched thru the SHLSP launch site.

We believe it is necessary to find a solution to the restricted drain capacity that currently exists. Practical solutions include expanding the drain capacity or installing a filtered recycling system for the used water in the boat washes.

*North Higgins Lake State Park (NHLSP)*

The NHLSP has an offsite boat wash. This boat wash was funded by the Higgins Lake Foundation in 2008. The yearly maintenance for the boat wash has been paid for by the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association. As campers and boaters enter the park they will be told about the boat wash and its location. There will be a boat wash employee at the boat launch instructing boaters as to the location of the offsite boat wash. There will be a boat wash employee at the boat wash washing boats.

Engineering for an onsite boat wash will be submitted in the 2018 DNR Call for Projects.

*West Launch*

A boat wash employee will be at the West Launch to inform boaters that boat washing is available at the NHLSP boat wash.

On eight weekends during the 2018 boating season arrangements have been made for a portable boat wash to be present in the upper parking area by the West Launch to wash boats.

The boat wash dates for the portable boat wash are:

6-30-18, 7-14-18, 7-21-18, and 8-04-18

Engineering for a boat wash at West Launch will be submitted in the 2018 DNR Call for Projects.

We want to thank Ron Olson, Director of the DNRPRD, for providing funding which has helped start this program. Also thank you to the members of the local Parks and Recreation Staff which include Anna Sylvester, Bill Doan, Josh Pellow and Rachael Roberts who have met with representatives from the Higgins Lake Foundation and the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association every two weeks over the past five months. This has been a collaborative effort by all parties. This task force will continue to meet to develop and improve this important project.

**HELP WANTED:** Be the first line of defense to prevent the spread of invasive species in Higgins Lake. We need staff for the North and South Boat Wash facilities. Contact the HLPOA Office for more information, [hlpoa0@gmail.com](mailto:hlpoa0@gmail.com) or call the office (989) 275-9181.

***Directory Info Reminder***

If you were in the 2016 Directory, your entry will be the same. (Please see your entry and contact us for changes.)

If you are new to the HLPOA, your information will be included unless you contact us. You may choose to share none, some or all your contact information.

We try our best to publish accurate member information. Please direct corrections, changes or requests by May 1. Email or mail the HLPOA Office, PO Box 55, Roscommon, MI 48653

[hlpoa0@gmail.com](mailto:hlpoa0@gmail.com)



**Did you receive this newsletter via USPS?**  
PLEASE consider providing an email address to receive the newsletter and save printing and mailing costs. The HLPOA does not share email lists.

### ***Educational Opportunities on the Horizon***

**Michigan Lakes and Streams Association 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference** “Preserving your Freshwater Gem: The Essentials of Lake Stewardship” April 20 & 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 at Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, MI <https://www.mymlsa.org/mlsa-57th-annual-conference/>

**Greenbelt Seminar** June 26, 10am, RAM Center and native plant sale offered by HLF, Huron Pines, and Otsego Conservation Office. Free but registration is required; call 989-275-9183

Did you know the HLPOA subscribes to “The Michigan Riparian”? Copies available to read at the office.

#### **SEVEN REASONS (and counting) WHY BEING A MEMBER IS BENEFICIAL TO HIGGINS LAKE**

Dues from HLPOA members are the primary source of funding to keep our organization going. Every year in December, membership renewal envelopes are mailed to all current members and nonmember riparians on Higgins Lake. A follow up reminder post card was mailed on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 2017 members who haven't renewed their 2018 membership yet. Without riparians joining and financially supporting HLPOA, the essential programs for the health of Higgins Lake would not exist.

In this newsletter you have read articles about important programs the HLPOA has organized, developed, and supported.

1. Swimmers Itch Program
2. Water testing for bacteria and nutrient loading at numerous sites around the lake four times throughout 2018.
3. HLPOA working with the Roscommon Sheriff Marine Patrol to control excessive speed and loud boats on the lake.
4. Aquatic invasive species prevention and boat wash program on Higgins Lake
5. Potential Goose removal program
6. HLPOA working with the Roscommon Sheriff Department on enforcement of illegal boat mooring and road end violations
7. Lobbyist on retainer in Lansing working for HLPOA so that our voice is heard by regulatory departments and legislators on issues which affect Higgins Lake

#### **FOR ONLY \$90.00 YOU WILL BE SUPPORTING THESE IMPORTANT LAKE PROGRAMS**

If you need a dues envelope mailed to you call the HLPOA office at 989-275-9181 or e-mail a request to Kathleen at [hlpoa0@gmail.com](mailto:hlpoa0@gmail.com)

## Forget Your Dues?

If you received a post card from HLPOA recently it was probably because you:

- a) Were the winner of a free shower (do not use too much water because we would rather wash a boat) at one of the State Park Boat Washes on the lake.
- b) Were the winner of a bucket of Zebra Mussels-remember they must be alive before you cook them.
- c) Volunteered to let Canadian Geese spend the summer on your yard because you always wanted organic fertilizer.
- d) You forgot that the HLPOA dues were due January 31, 2018.

**THE CORRECT ANSWER IS (d). It's better for the lake and you. Renew your membership! Send \$90.00 payment to:**

**HLPOA  
P.O. BOX 55  
Roscommon, Mi.  
48653**

## **HLSIO/HLPOA MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER ON 2018 SI CONTROL PROGRAM**

After a lengthy rulemaking and public comment period, the DNR recently issued new Common Merganser Control Policy and Procedures (Procedures.) The Procedures define the eligibility, approvals, control options and process required for obtaining 3-year common merganser control permits beginning in 2018. The standardized process is intended to increase the availability of common merganser control permits.

Under the new DNR Procedures, supported by HLPOA/HLSIO/MISIP, Michigan lake associations can apply for permits. For a more complete summary of the process, the HLPOA/HLSIO actions and our 2018 program, <http://www.hlpoa.org>.

A key new requirement to obtain a common merganser control permit is approval signatures of at least 70% of lakefront property owners or a Resolution by either the three Townships or the two County governments. After some surprising resistance, we were successful in obtaining a common merganser Resolution from Roscommon County that allowed us to request a control permit in 2018. We also obtained Petition signatures from the three Crawford County property owners.

HLPOA timely filed its common merganser control permit application prior to the March 31 deadline. We are optimistic the DNR will approve our permit application. The 2018 program will again focus on trap and relocation of common mergansers as the only proven, highly effective control option. We did not request the option to harass common mergansers in the spring because it has been demonstrated to be unnecessary and ineffective in controlling SI or preventing nesting on Higgins and other lakes. It also would interfere with our research project.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service recently decided not to permit limited lethal take of common mergansers as a control option. We did not seek limited lethal take for control on Higgins Lake, so that decision will not affect our program. We

support limited lethal take of common mergansers only as part of a Scientific Collection Permit or legal hunting. Use of artificial nest boxes to destroy eggs and nests, and attract and kill nesting hens, continues to be banned.

HLSIO will again sign a contract with Dr. Curt Blankespoor and his team for 2018. The cost will be significantly reduced from 2017 and far less than earlier years. The HLSIO will again benefit from a supplement from the state legislative appropriation. Details will be finalized soon and provided as part of the 2018 SI control program fundraising effort.

HLPOA/HLSIO are pleased to announce a new research program for 2018. Common merganser adult pairs, and hens captured as a part of the trap and relocation program, will be fitted with state-of-the-art transmitters that will allow us to find and seal additional nests. Killing a nesting merganser without sealing the natural nest allows another to take its place. We continue to believe sealing natural nests is the only effective, permanent and sustainable method to prevent nesting and permanently reduce common merganser broods. We want to thank Bill Demmer and Bob Hoffman for their generous support for this ground breaking new research program.

## **NEW CANADA GOOSE REMOVAL PROGRAM OPPORTUNITY**

During our work on the SI control rulemaking, we learned about a DNR Canada Goose trap and relocation program opportunity. Canada Geese create a nuisance because of their extensive droppings. They also can create an e-coli health risk. To address this recurring problem, we obtained the prerequisite County-wide support Resolution and have been in contact with a Goose control contractor. We will monitor the Goose population on Higgins Lake this spring and decide if a control program is warranted this spring/summer. If a permit is obtained (our filing due date is May 21), Canada Goose adults and goslings will be captured from early June to early July (when both are unable to fly.) They are transported to another, approved state location.

### Welcome New Board Members

Welcome to Bruce Carleton. Bruce and his wife Julie own a cottage on Flag Point. He has spent time at Higgins every summer at their cottage which has been in the family since the 1930's. We look forward to having Bruce join the HLPOA Board of Directors.

Welcome Mark Lutz. Mark is a fulltime resident at Higgins Lake Kennedy Beach with his wife and two sons; they also have a daughter living in Columbus Ohio. His roots to this area go back to the mid-70's when they first started spending summers on the lower eastside of Higgins Lake. After retiring in 2016, following a 34-year career in the food business, we immediately picked-up and moved to live fulltime on the lake.

**HLPOA Board:** President, Charlene Cornell; Vice President, Brad Gibson; Secretary, Herb Weatherly; Treasurer, Greg Semack. **Directors:** Wayne Brooks, Bruce Carleton, Marc Lutz, Bob McKellar, Fred Swinehart, Jim Vondale, Dianne Wagner

### Sincere Thanks

The following have generously donated funds to support the HLPOA in its endeavors:

General Fund-Dennis & Nadine Corte, Mark & Elizabeth Dupuie, Suzanne Fabian, Eleanor Heusner, Charlotte Mlot, Wayne & Jill Schoeppach

Environmental Fund-Kurt & Marybeth Anderson, Robert Blamer, Martha Clapp, Jane Currie, Mark & Elizabeth Dupuie, Suzanne Fabian, Michael E. Johnson, Kurt & Marilyn Schmid

Legal Fund-Dennis & Nadine Corte, Mark & Elizabeth Dupuie, Dean & Karyn Elson, Constance MacClaren, Edwin & Suzanne Voss, Robert & Clarice Williams

Thanks for invaluable volunteer hours- Ric Blamer, Chuck Brick, Jack Cornell, Nick Dewey, Bill Isenstein, Steve Ricketts



### HIGGINS LAKE LAND CONSERVANCY CREATES THE "ALMEDA BEACH WILDERNESS PRESERVE"

The Higgins Lake Land Conservancy has created the Almeda Beach Wilderness Preserve in recognition of the generous contributions of the Townsend Family, the residents of Almeda Beach and the Higgins Lake community. These donations have enabled the preservation of 26 acres of sensitive wetlands adjacent to Higgins Lake and the Cut River. A primary goal of the Land Conservancy is to preserve watershed lands in a natural state. Managing watershed land preserves the beauty of the lake and the quality of life for the community.

To find out more about the Higgins Lake Land Conservancy go to: [HigginsLakeLandConservancy.com](http://HigginsLakeLandConservancy.com)

### Free staffed boat washes and invasive species education pilot project available on Higgins Lake this season

In an effort to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species on Higgins Lake, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Higgins Lake Property Owner's Association and Higgins Lake Foundation are working cooperatively on a pilot project to offer free staffed boat washing stations and aquatic invasive species education.

