

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association™

PO Box 55 308-B Lake Street Roscommon, MI 48653

Website: www.hlpoa.org Email: hlpoa0@gmail.com

Ph.: (989) 275-9181 Fax: (989) 275-9182 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

Website Update

The HLPOA™ website (hlpoa.org) recently underwent a couple of changes with the goal of making it more user-friendly and easier for visitors to the website to find information of interest to them. The more visible of the two changes appears on the top of each page of the website. We have expanded the number of "subject buttons" from 8 choices to 16 and have changed the titles on many of them to better inform the reader as to the information that will be seen by selecting each button. The other change is the appearance of a "search" window (notice the little magnifying glass?) that appears on the left hand side of every page of the website, below the large HLPOA logo. Regardless of which page the reader may be on, a new topic can be typed into the search window and the reader will be re-directed automatically to the appropriate page(s) on the website that has information related to that particular search topic.

Chuck Brick

Did you know . . .

. . . when leaves fall, they decompose and restock the soil with nutrients and organic matter, but leaves blown or raked into the lake decompose and the nutrients will feed **unwanted algae growth** next summer? The algae uses up oxygen that fish and native plants use. **Let's do our part - do not rake or blow leaves into the lake.**



The HLPOA joined in on the Higgins Lake Roscommon Chamber of Commerce, (HLRCC), 2nd Annual *Scarecrow Mania* community event. Dianne Wagner, Linda Brick and "bathing beauty" Chuck Brick assembled the display outside the HLPOA office. Thank you to Ric Blamer and Charlene Cornell for use of the boat! The scarecrows are on display through October 16.

President's Message

The HLPOA Board and it's hard-working committees have had a very busy, productive summer. Hope you have had a chance to read the Current and Future Action Plan sent just before Labor Day and on our website, hlpoa.org. This newsletter is even more informative as it reports on our recent progress in several areas. From contacts with local, county, and state governments, to partnerships with the lakes in Roscommon county and elsewhere in Northern Michigan, to dialogue and collaboration with MDNR/Parks and Recreation Division, to hosting visiting representatives from USGS, we are diligently working with our mission "to preserve, protect and enhance Higgins Lake and its surrounding watershed" in mind. I invite you to join a committee, make a contribution, and encourage your lake neighbors and relatives to join this amazing Association!

Dedicated to preserving the quality and beauty of Higgins Lake,

Charlene Cornell

Litigation Committee

The lawsuit filed by former HLPOA board member and Treasurer, Marv Bolton, against the HLPOA is currently scheduled for a Final Pretrial Conference on October 19, 2017.

Extensive discovery about Mr. Bolton's claims, including written interrogatories and depositions, has been completed and Judge Bennett can be presented with a clear picture of Mr. Bolton's claims and the HLPOA's response to those claims. A date for the HLPOA's Motion for Summary Judgment to dismiss the Bolton lawsuit will be set at the Conference.

We continue to believe Mr. Bolton's claims, that focus on changes to the 2014 HLPOA financial report by both Mr. Bolton and the HLPOA which were reviewed, discussed and then approved by members at the 2015 annual meeting, are meritless.

Among the changes to the 2014 financial report being disputed by Mr. Bolton is an accounting for the recovery by the HLPOA from the HLF for unreimbursed DASH boat expenses of \$2,074.75 that significantly benefited HLPOA members.

Total legal costs paid by the HLPOA to date, including costs for an unsuccessful attempt to resolve the matter with the assistance of an impartial mediator, are \$13,346.

Jim Vondale

Tip from 1953 HLPOA Directory
 "For ambulance service, call Steuernol Funeral Home, Roscommon 294."

Riparian Committee

The HLPOA board and Riparian Committee have been busy working together to advance the interests of HLPOA members. Some of the many important activities are discussed below.

Updated Web Page

An important part of this effort is effectively and efficiently communicating useful information about Riparian issues important to HLPOA members. To accomplish this goal, the HLPOA board approved changes to the HLPOA website (hlpoa.org) that will facilitate storage and easy retrieval of information of benefit to HLPOA members. The Riparian Committee web page is being expanded to include additional information such as important ordinances and statutes, relevant opinions and other articles from Counsel Bill Carey and how to report violations such as illegal boat mooring. Look for this information to be added over the coming months.

Meetings With DNR Parks and Recreation

The Michigan DNR Parks and Recreation Division, (MDNRPRD), manages four major facilities on Higgins Lake, the North and South State Parks, the West Launch and MacMullan Conference Center. These facilities host hundreds of thousands of visitors and the launching of thousands of boats onto Higgins Lake each year. They have a major impact on Higgins Lake, including helping the local economy. But they also have negative impacts to water quality, including the introduction of invasive species to the lake and boat congestion.

The HLPOA board has begun a dialogue with MDNRPRD to address concerns about these negative impacts on the lake in an effort to develop a cooperative, shared approach to resolving them. While we understand the MDNRPRD has a mission to provide public access to the beautiful waters of Higgins Lake, that increased access carries a responsibility of helping lakefront property owners to protect the lake.

This dialogue is being led by the HLPOA board through close coordination of the HLPOA Riparian and Environmental Committees. The focus of the discussions includes the significant expansion over the years of the West Launch, protection of the lake from pollution during the current West Launch maintenance and dredging operation, a focus on providing better protection of the lake from invasive species from launching boats, placing reasonable limits on boat capacity, size and noise, including rigorous enforcement of current noise and speed laws and financial support by DNRPRD for these efforts. A more complete summary of the specific topics under review can be found at hlpoa.org.

Two meetings have already been held with the managers of the North and South State Parks, Anna Sylvester, Chief of Northern Michigan Field Operations and the MDNR invasive species specialist. Our next meeting will be held on October 17 with Ron Olson, Chief of

MDNRPRD. We plan a continuing dialogue with MDNRPRD to foster this relationship and reach resolution of these issues.

Already, we have been able to make progress on some of the issues including a commitment by DNRPRD to address extensive eurasian milfoil at the three launch sites earlier in the season to avoid launching boats carrying it into the lake, the purchase and use of a



new and improved containment or turbidity curtain (see photos) for use at the current West DNR Launch maintenance site, the addition of fencing at the West Launch to address



trespassing, the removal of signs warning of swimmer's itch at the North and South State Parks because of significant reduction in SI and a commitment to work together to address illegal parking along West Higgins Lake Drive.

We still have many important issues to address together and we will keep HLPOA members informed of our further progress. We have also begun a dialogue with the Roscommon County Sheriff's Marine Division on the enforcement of speed and noise issues and will work to join them in these discussions.

Enforcement of Public Act 56

Public Act 56 was enacted under the leadership of the HLPOA. A copy is currently available under the Riparian Committee on hlpoa.org. It codified certain of the provisions of the Jacobs decision focused on legal use of road ends. Enforcement of its provisions, particularly those relating to the mooring of boats at road ends, the registration of docks and the insurance for docks, has been managed in Gerrish Township by the police department. Reports of violations are to be made to the Gerrish Township police. The revised Riparian Committee website will address these issues in greater detail.

Requirements and enforcement of road ends in Lyon Township until recently has been a concern. The HLPOA met with Lyon Township officials last fall and urged them to pass and enforce a road end ordinance and to coordinate with Gerrish Township. We're pleased to announce that Lyon Township has recently enacted a detailed road end ordinance. The ordinance includes requirements for dock registration and dock insurance. Enforcement of Public Act 56 in Lyon Township is now being handled by the Roscommon County Sheriff's Department. Detailed information about these important actions, including how to report violations, also are being added to the HLPOA website under the Riparian Committee heading. The HLPOA will continue to work with local government on these important issues.

AMVETS Lodge Marina

As previously reported, The HLPOA will be filing suit in Roscommon County Circuit Court to enforce the provisions of the Lyon Township zoning requirements. We are challenging the granting of a marina permit by the DEQ for a major new marina on the west shore of Higgins Lake. We will advise members when the suit is filed, provide you with copies of the Complaint and keep you informed of developments. We will be asking members for support for this important litigation to stop the building of illegal marinas on Higgins Lake. This is consistent with the new HLPOA Marina Policy passed by members at the 2017 annual meeting. A copy of that Marina Policy is currently available under the Riparian Committee on hlpoa.org.

Jim Vondale

Environmental Committee

Elimination of Copper Sulfate Use in Higgins Lake

We had two meetings with the management of Michigan DNR Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) where this topic was raised. Present from the PRD were Anna Sylvester, Rachel Roberts and Josh Pellow. We were assured that nowhere in the PRD facilities of Northern Michigan were permits sought for the use of copper sulfate for any reason. There have been use permits issued by the DEQ for use by private citizens, ostensibly for suppression of swimmer's itch. That is no longer an issue in Higgins Lake. That treatment has proved ineffective. The PRD is helping us gain assurance from the Michigan DEQ that no permitted use will be authorized for Higgins Lake in the future. We have a DEQ meeting planned with this on the agenda for October.

Hybrid Eurasian Water Milfoil (HEWM) Suppression Developments

We had discussions concerning HEWM suppression with John Deming of the Clark Lake Property Owners Association in Southern Michigan. (www.ClarkLakeSpirit.org). We learned a lot about their failures and successes. At their recommendation, we have continued the HEWM suppression conversation with their preferred herbicide supplier SePro. The SePro representative for Michigan, J. T. Gravel, said that there is an exciting new product now being evaluated by the US DEQ, which may be available for evaluation and testing by the Michigan DEQ in 2018. Early field trials have shown it to be extremely effective at selectively killing HEWM at very low levels of application, while having only minimal impacts upon native aqueous plants. We will be following the progress of this work closely in the coming months.

Near Shore Baseline Ecological Data Developments

Members of the Environmental Committee and the HLPOA board, Charlene Cornell, Wayne Brooks, Kevin Kessler, Herb Weatherly, Fred Swinehart and Dianne Wagner, hosted a visit by limnologist Mary Anne Evans from the Ann Arbor office of the US Geological Survey (USGS) at the end of August. We did a short water tour in the morning and spent the afternoon workshopping project definition, methodologies and developing objectives for updating the status of our near shore environment. Her major focus area is the Great Lakes, especially nutrient-loading and consequent algal blooms in Lake Erie. She will stay in touch with us in the future, but recommended that we continue our work with the USGS office in Lansing. They focus on inland lakes in Michigan. So we arranged a meeting with limnologists Lisa Fogarty, Angela Brennan and Jessica Maurer from the USGS Lansing Office on September 22nd, following a similar program as before. This effort resulted in a series of plans that will be discussed with the HLPOA board at our next meeting in October.

Deep Basin Core Sampling for Historical Ecological Data

Some discussion of this program was held with Lisa, Jessica and Angela from the USGS using Dave Jude's note as a starting point. No program has yet been defined. The work is typically carried out in the winter when ice cover creates more quiescent conditions with the bottom sediments. They will do some research and come back to us with some contacts that may prove worth further effort.

Fred Swinehart

Swimmer's Itch Update

Under the leadership of the HLPOA board, substantial progress continues to be made in the fight against swimmer's itch. Here is a report on some of the many recent activities.

Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization (HLSIO)

The 7 member HLSIO board includes two HLPOA board members, Jim Vondale (HLSIO President) and Dianne Wagner (HLSIO Vice President.) This ensures HLPOA members have a strong voice in HLSIO programs and

activities. The entire HLPOA board continues to provide strong support for HLSIO programs and activities based on the July 2015 Resolution by HLPOA members.

The summer 2017 HLSIO swimmer's itch (SI) program, utilizing Swimmer's Itch Solutions (SIS), was led by Dr. Curt Blankespoor and his team of scientists. In its third year, SIS completed a lower-cost modified maintenance control program on Higgins Lake. The program continued to use trap and relocation of common merganser broods as the primary SI reduction tool. SIS trapped and relocated 100% of broods in 2017 keeping the lake free of common merganser broods for the third straight summer. The objective metric used to measure progress, lake-wide snail infection rate, showed a further reduction of SI on Higgins Lake in 2017 with a more than 95% reduction of SI over the three-year period (2015-2017.) This significant reduction in SI is consistent with past results by SICON LLC on other lakes. Charts showing this progressive reduction in SI infection are posted on hlpoa.org. The SIS final report on results of the three-year Higgins Lake SI program will be released in October and will be posted on hlpoa.org.

The 2017 HLSIO fundraiser sponsored by Fred's of Roscommon restaurant and Witt's Collision raised more than \$22,000, including a check of \$10,000 representing contributions from each of the more than 400 residents of Camp Curnalia at the northwest corner of Higgins Lake.

The 8-member MISIP steering committee met and approved distributions from the second (June 2017) \$250,000 state appropriation that will benefit the HLSIO program on Higgins Lake. With contributions from hundreds of supporters, and state appropriation supplements for the HLSIO programs from the two state SI appropriations in excess of \$100,000, HLSIO will end 2017 in the black. HLSIO also will receive additional funding to help pay for its anticipated 2018 SI control program.

Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership (MISIP)

MISIP held its Fall 2017 Conference at the Haggerty Center in Traverse City. The all-day conference was attended by HLPOA board members Jim Vondale (co-chair of MISIP) and Dianne Wagner. The program included reports from Ron Reimink and Dr. Randy DeJong (who works with Dr. Curt Blankespoor) summarizing the summer 2017 swimmer's itch SI programs and research on 5 lakes (Higgins, Glen, Leelanau, Lime and Crystal.). More than 30 broods representing a 100% success rate were trapped and relocated from the five lakes.

The newly formed MISIP Scientific Review Committee (which includes biologists from the various MISIP lake associations and Dr. Sam Loker, a world-renowned parasitologist from the University of New Mexico) discussed their work to evaluate and prioritize SI research proposals for 2018. When funded, these research projects will further advance the scientific knowledge about SI and enhance current SI control programs. If you are interested in funding one of these important SI research projects, please contact an HLPOA board member for more information.

The meeting representatives discussed actions by MISIP and the MDNR to continue to confirm that common merganser relocation by MISIP lake associations poses no risk of causing SI at the relocation sites. They also discussed criteria being prepared by MDNR and MISIP to expand the number of common merganser relocation sites for 2018.



MISIP State Senate Meetings on 9/27 (l to r):
 Jim Vondale - MISIP Co-Chair & HLPOA board member,
 David Hildenbrand - Chairman of Senate Appropriations
 Committee and Joel Buzzell - MISIP Co-Chair & Past
 President of Crystal Lake Watershed Association.

Barb Avers, MDNR Waterfowl and Wetlands Specialist, attended and reviewed an outline of a proposed new SI permit program for 2018. HLSIO will need to qualify for a trap and relocation control permit under the new rules for 2018 to continue its SI reduction program. The MISIP and Higgins Lake representatives have been working closely with the MDNR on these new permit rules which are expected to be finalized in late 2017. The HLPOA board will keep members informed of important developments.

On September 27 MISIP co-chairs, Jim Vondale and Joel Buzzell (Crystal Lake), along with HLPOA lobbyist John Lindley, met with Michigan State Senators Dave Hildenbrand, Jim Stamas, Wayne Schmidt and Darwin Booher. The purpose of the meetings was to explain the significant progress being made in the fight against SI in Michigan and to thank the Senators for their leadership and financial support for MISIP's efforts. **If any of these Senators represent you, we ask that you send your own letter or email of thanks for their continued support for Higgins Lake and the critical fight against SI.**

Please visit misip.org to learn more about the MISIP and its programs.

Jim Vondale

Sincere Thanks

Since the August newsletter, the following have generously donated funds from \$10 - \$300 to support the HLPOA in its endeavors:

General Fund

Larry & Judith Beckert
Jean Burtch
Wilderness Corporate
Sandra Hay
Marilyn Laskos
Robert & Jan Soupal

Environmental Fund

Constance M. McCormick

Correction:

In the August Newsletter, donor Sandra Olson was misidentified. We sincerely apologize for the error and thank her for her donation to the Environmental Fund.

2017 - 2018 HLPOA Board:

President - Charlene Cornell, Vice President -Brad Gibson,
Secretary - Herb Weatherly, Treasurer - Chuck Brick.
Directors: Wayne Brooks, Mike Burnside, Bob Hoffman, Bob McKellar, Fred Swinehart, Jim Vondale, Dianne Wagner.
Administrative Assistant - Kathleen Barger

Communications & Membership Committee

Help Wanted - Marketing & PR

In an effort for HLPOA to continue to expand the membership and to increase its presence in the community and throughout the state, we would like to find members who would like to join us in this endeavor. HLPOA does so much more than publish a newsletter and maintain a website. It is a multifaceted organization that is respected statewide and viewed as a leader in addressing many of the problems that inland lakes are currently facing. The mission statement of HLPOA is "To protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Higgins Lake and its surrounding watershed". The Communications and Membership Committee is looking for members who would like to work on the committee to help with marketing and public relations. One does not need to be a full-time resident of the Higgins Lake community to help. Many of the board and committee members are weekenders and seasonal residents. We are able to hold meetings and communicate via conference calls and e-mail.

If you are interested or would to receive more information contact HLPOA at hlpoaO@gmail.com or [989-275-9181](tel:989-275-9181).

Wayne Brooks



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