

Fall 2013 Update

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

October 15, 2013

Dear Members,

I want to report to you on two areas in which we are working very diligently to protect the interests of our members and the integrity of our beautiful lake.

Lake Level Study

At the end of July I met with six (6) upper management representatives of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) including the Fisheries Division Chief, Parks and Recreation Chief, and their Senior Water Policy Adviser. Also in attendance were, Senator Booher and Representative Rendon's chief of staff along with two lobbyists from Public Affairs Associates, Scott Breslin and John Lindley. This allowed us to discuss various issues regarding the lake study and seek clarification. The critical message conveyed to us by the DNR is that this study, in their view, is not about removal of the dam, and it is not productive for any message to be conveyed which characterizes the lake study as related to dam removal.

DNR representatives made it clear to us that they should have done a better job of communicating to the public that the issue of dam removal is not a part of the study. We left the meeting with the very clear message that the DNR supports the lake study, but dam removal is not part of it in any form. It was very important that our lobbyists and the Chief of Staff for both Senator Booher and Representative Rendon heard this message. Our members need to know that we are working very hard to use our resources in order to make clear our position in opposition to removal of the dam. Most importantly, the DNR acknowledges this issue is not on their radar screen nor connected in any manner to the lake study. They also point out that they have a vested interest in the two State Parks and the West Launch site which are used for recreational activities on Higgins Lake. The HLPOA Board wants each of our members to be aware of this information.

Swimmer's Itch – The most important issue and problem facing our lake.

We have been meeting on this perplexing issue with the DNR seeking a commitment toward a resolution of this difficult problem, "swimmer's itch". I am pleased to report to you that our efforts are showing progress. With the able help of Representative Rendon, Senator Booher and his staff we have been advised that the DNR will, by the end of October, issue a formal position, in writing on its plan to address this problem. Frankly, we are indebted to Senator Booher's office and Representative Rendon's office for their recognition of this problem and its negative impact on the lake, economy, and tourism in Northern Michigan. We would also like to mention that Gerrish and Lyon Township have formed a task force to take some pro-active action to help mitigate swimmer's itch.

We will put all our energy and efforts into seeking an answer to swimmer's itch which is our highest priority. Success does not just happen. We are being pro-active with the help of the Higgins Lake

Foundation (HLF), making strides to find a solution to this perplexing and serious issue. The HLF has funded a grant to Michigan State University to study near-shore nutrient loading and snail density.

In summary, I want you to know that the HLPOA Board and I are spending considerable effort to assure our members of our commitment to protect the interests of all riparians on our lake. As President of the Board, I intend to keep you informed by email and our web-site of our efforts made on your behalf so we can be assured that you will receive "facts" and not rumors, false information, or unscientific opinions. With your help we will work diligently to preserve and protect Higgins Lake.

Sincerely,

Pat Springstead

President

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association