

HLPOASM / DNR Parks and Recreation Meetings to Protect Higgins Lake Water Quality

Meeting with Ron Olson, DNRPRD Chief, on October 17, 2017

Working Together

- ▶ HLPOA recognizes the value of collaboration in addressing serious issues like water quality.
 - ▶ We appreciate the consideration and support we have been given by DNRPRD.
 - ▶ HLPOA is working with other organizations on the lake including the Higgins Lake Land Conservancy (HLLC), Higgins Lake Foundation (HLF) and Higgins Lake Environmental and Economic Coalition (HLEEC) who have representatives attending this meeting.
 - ▶ HLPOA is working with leadership of Houghton Lake Lake Association and Lake St. Helen Association, both in Roscommon County.
 - ▶ HLPOA and the other four lead MISIP lakes (Crystal, Glen, Leelanau, Lime) have agreed to work together on invasive species to form a Michigan Invasive Species Partnership (MISP) of lakes across Michigan, to share information, accelerate knowledge and science and develop action plans.
 - ▶ We want your views and continued support to work together to address key water quality issues. This is a long term effort and it will require continued close collaboration and long term support. We can do this if we work together!

Invasive Species

- ▶ We believe all of the major lake organizations (HLPOA, HLF, HLLC, HLEEC) and DNRPRD jointly share the responsibility to protect Higgins Lake from invasive species. Does DNRPRD agree? What is the DNRPRD position on the need for mandatory, staffed boat washes at 3 Higgins Lake DNRPRD launch sites?
- ▶ We are firmly committed for the long term to achieving success. The HLPOA will model its program on its swimmer's itch program that successfully reduced swimmer's itch on the lake. The HLPOA vision for an effective invasive species control program includes:
 - ▶ Agreement on a schedule for early and regular maintenance of Eurasian Water Milfoil at 3 DNR launch sites on Higgins Lake to avoid launching boats carrying milfoil into the lake.
 - ▶ Add boat washes within the other 2 high volume DNR launch sites (The South State Park has a boat wash inside park property. Move the North State Park boat wash onto Park property. Apply for a grant to establish a mobile boat wash at the West DNR Launch in partnership with Houghton Lake and Lake St. Helen.) A shared, mobile boat wash is a temporary help until a permanent boat wash is installed or it is determined the West Launch is unnecessary.
 - ▶ Make boat washing mandatory with staffing to ensure effectiveness (Discussions began in August 2012 to make the South State Park a pilot for mandatory washing. Finalize the plan asap and move forward to implement for summer 2018.) Support HLPOA efforts to work with Lyon and Gerrish Townships to pass local ordinances mandating boat washing before launching a boat (like Glen and Crystal.)
 - ▶ The HLPOA's Environmental Committee is working with other lake associations to carefully evaluate the risks and benefits of various methods of controlling Eurasian milfoil (DASH boat and new herbicide products) along with implementing an objective basis (e.g. mapping with aerial color infrared photography) to measure success. Like swimmer's itch, we believe objective metrics are critical. We will keep our members closely informed and make a recommendation at the 2018 annual meeting.
 - ▶ Coordinate with and support the Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) led Task Force on Invasive Species. Former HLPOA President Bob Frye is the President of MWA and Charlene Cornell is a board member.

Boat capacity, noise, speed and size

- ▶ The HLPOA believes the HLPOA and DNRPRD share the responsibility to address boat congestion, excessive boat noise, speed and size. Does DNRPRD agree? If so, how will you help?
- ▶ Does DNRPRD believe there should be any limits on boat size, boat type (wake boats) or boat noise for boats launching at its 3 sites? If so, what? Does DNRPRD believe it should allow boats that exceed state law noise limits to be launched from its 3 sites?
- ▶ The 3 DNR launch sites are the source of a large number of boats added to the lake, including larger and more powerful boats that create excessive noise, travel at excessive speeds and create excessive wakes. Our vision to address these issues includes:
 - ▶ Set regular meetings with HLPOA, Roscommon County Sheriff's (RCSD) Marine Division and State Park Managers to develop strategies to address these issues, including effective enforcement of existing state laws. For example, have DNRPRD personnel use boat noise measuring devices at 3 DNRPRD launch sites on Higgins Lake and prevent launching if state law is violated. Notify the RCSD if a boat found to violate state noise law is launched. Add signage about speed and boat noise laws.
 - ▶ Meet with Jordan Byelich, DNR subject matter expert on boat capacity, type, size, etc. to understand current DNRPRD boat launch rules/limits and the basis for those rules/limits.
 - ▶ Work with DNRPRD to set reasonable rules/limits on boat capacity, size and boat type that protect the lake.

West DNR Launch

- ▶ The HLPOA believes the HLPOA and DNRPRD share a responsibility to ensure the West Launch does not adversely impact the quality of the lake including water quality and the property rights of nearby neighbors. DNRPRD has responded to HLPOA requests for help.
- ▶ HLPOA appreciates DNRPRD efforts to minimize the effect of recent maintenance work on Higgins Lake water quality, including use of a new turbidity curtain and excavator during the work.
- ▶ HLPOA appreciates the commitment by DNRPRD to install fencing and work with HLPOA to enact and enforce appropriate local parking rules.
- ▶ Additional help that would further address issues includes increased staffing of the West Launch and clearer rules of conduct for visitors.
- ▶ Other West Launch issues are covered in topics of invasive species and boat capacity, etc.

Working Together on Funding

- ▶ These actions, particularly an effective program to address invasive species, will require funding through;
 - ▶ Working together to obtain a grant for a portable boat wash with staffing for the West DNR Launch. We plan to work with Lake St. Helen and Houghton Lake on this grant;
 - ▶ HLPOA will coordinate with and support efforts of the Michigan Waterfront Alliance and the newly created Task Force to raise additional funds from state boating registration fees to address state-wide invasive species issues.
 - ▶ HLPOA wants DNRPRD views on creating a reasonable special user fee for the hundreds of thousands of Higgins Lake visitors to DNRPRD facilities to support the invasive species control program.
 - ▶ HLPOA would like assistance in identifying other state and federal grant programs to support the Higgins Lake invasive species control program.
- ▶ HLPOA will work to raise funds locally for this important program.