



Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

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

In this edition:

- President's Message
- Membership Renewal
- DNR 2019 Invasive Species Program
- DNR 2020 Aquatic Invasive Species Plan
- New Years Resolution
- Sewer Project Update
- Science Corner
- Plastics
- AMVETS lawsuit
- Cut River History
- Resources
- Sincere Thanks

Have a new neighbor? Tell them about all the activities benefitting the lake that HLPOA supports then call or e-mail the office to have information sent to them.

President's Message



HLPOA begins 2020 with a celebration: it has been 85 years since the founding of HLPOA, the premiere lake association in the state. HLPOA stands alone as the longest-serving, primary force striving to preserve the beauty and quality of Higgins Lake. Articles of Association were filed in July 1935, signed by four friends. The families of two signers, Arthur A. Meyer and Paul H. Bruske, still enjoy our wonderful lake. We would like to learn more about our founding. Please let us know if you have any information on the other two families of signers, Lawrence B. Benkert and Curt P. Schneider, which would help in contacting them. Articles of Incorporation, with two additional signers, were filed in January 1940. Any information on them, Howard W. Peirce, M.D., and Alan H. Pearson, would be greatly appreciated, too.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and stay up to date with activities of HLPOA during the winter months. You'll notice a couple articles of interest written by fellow members. We would most certainly welcome contributions of articles from you for future newsletters. Please consider making an effort to join the Board or a committee, invite friends and neighbors to join, or become a "Ready Volunteer" to help in the office on an "as needed" basis – we regularly could use your help when it's time to stuff envelopes. Please contact our Administrative Assistant, Kathleen, at 989-275-9181 or hlpoa0@gmail.com if you would like to make yourself available.

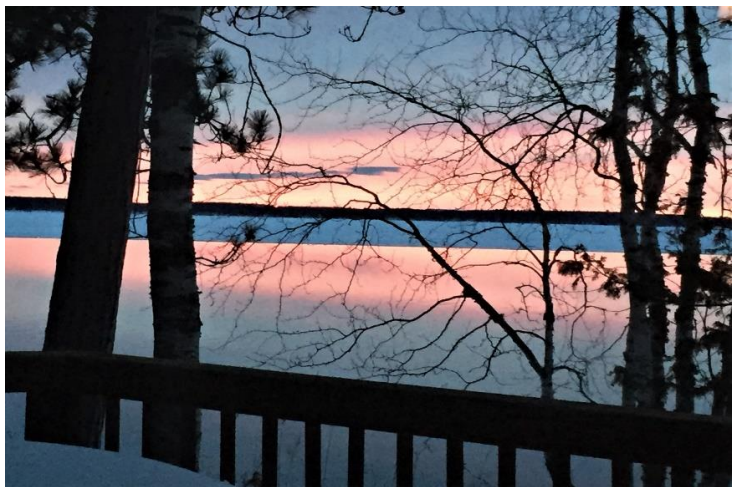
Dedicated to Preserving the Quality and Beauty of Higgins Lake,
Charlene Cornell, President HLPOA.

Membership Renewal

With the new year comes the annual reminder to renew your HLPOA membership. Thank you to the many who have done so already. The primary source of funding for HLPOA activities is, by far, the annual membership of \$100.00, due each year by January 31, along with the extra contributions many choose to make. Your contributions are gratefully acknowledged on the last page of this newsletter.

Did you know that HLPOA Board members attend every Lyon and Gerrish Township Board meeting, every County Commission meeting and many Road Commission meetings, serve on township committees, and other

statewide boards? There are issues, challenges and threats to Higgins Lake which were not present years ago. The importance of having a strong and visible organization representing the riparians on Higgins Lake both locally and at the state level is essential. Without member support there would not be an HLPOA. If there were not an HLPOA, in what condition would our beautiful lake be today?



Assessment of DNR Parks and Recreation Division 2019 Invasive Species Program

In August of 2018, Starry Stonewort (SSW), an aggressive Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), was discovered in Higgins Lake by a team of divers from Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), formerly known as Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Among the sites identified were the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) West Launch and the DNR lagoon launch site in the South State Park. These two access locations, both belonging to the DNR, are proven to be significant entry points for aquatic invasive species into Higgins Lake.

In November of 2018, a plan was presented to representatives of the HLPOA and the Higgins Lake Foundation. The plan was titled:

Michigan DNR-Parks and Recreation Division (DNR-PRD) AIS CONTROL PLAN FOR HIGGINS LAKE BOATING ACCESS SITES

This plan was designed to prevent and control the spread of AIS into Higgins Lake.

In the 2018 HLPOA Winter Newsletter, we were pleased to give a prominent, front-page report on the 2019 AIS Plan. We highlighted the indicated steps of the plan and were encouraged by the action outlined and hoped for its success.

Unfortunately, many aspects of the plan were either delayed or not implemented. This greatly diluted the impact the plan may have had in combatting AIS at the DNR launch sites.

At the end of one year's time and the supposed implementation of the 2019 AIS plan under the supervision of the DNR-PRD, the situation involving AIS in the South State Park lagoon has not been improved.



South State Park Boat Ramp Sept. 2019

Because of the failed plan, boats launched during the entire 2019 summer boating season at the DNR launch sites have dragged the invasive plants throughout Higgins Lake.

This has resulted in more of the invasive plant colonies likely being established. Ten years ago, Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) was found in the South State Park lagoon. Since then, under the care and stewardship of the DNR-PRD, the lagoon is now entirely infested with EWM and SSW and shows little, if any, evidence of native vegetation.



South State Park Boat Launch Site Aug 2019

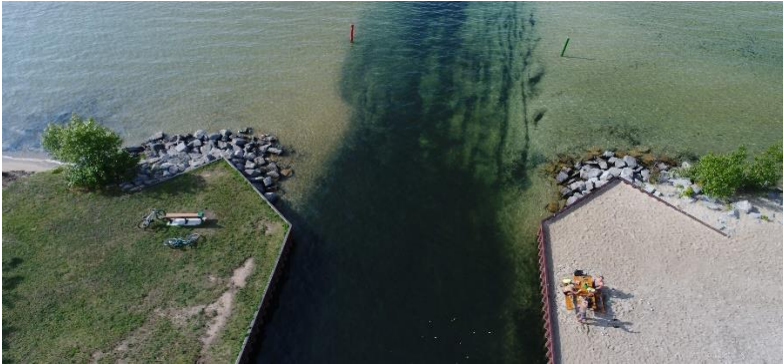
This past October, the HLPOA Board requested that members write letters to State of Michigan officials concerning the AIS situation at the South Higgins Lake State Park boat launch site. A hearty "thank you" to the many who wrote letters.

HLPOA has worked to be a willing and productive partner with DNR-PRD. HLPOA has provided volunteers for many initiatives, working for the good of Higgins Lake. For a year in 2018, four or five HLPOA representatives traveled, often hundreds of miles once or twice a month, to attend Task Force meetings with DNR-PRD personnel. The purpose of these meetings was to develop a boat wash program at the DNR launch sites. Members of HLPOA were instrumental in the introduction of the CD3 machines, a waterless boat/trailer cleaning system designed to remove clinging weeds, to the DNR-PRD members. HLPOA Task Force members researched their use, arranged for the company to travel from Minnesota to Higgins Lake, guided the company representatives to all three DNR launch sites, and provided hospitality. Due to our efforts, the DNR-PRD has purchased CD3 machines to be used at their Higgins Lake launch sites, and are considering purchasing additional CD3 machines for use on other Michigan lakes.

The HLPOA wants nothing more than for the DNR-PRD personnel at both the state and local level to develop a successful plan to combat AIS at the state-owned DNR-

PRD maintained boat launch facilities on Higgins Lake. Their success is our goal!

Michigan DNR - Parks & Recreation Division AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL PLAN FOR HIGGINS LAKE BOATING ACCESS SITES - GOALS FOR 2020



South State Park Lagoon Entrance 2018

The following plan was presented to representatives of HLPOA and Higgins Lake Foundation during a meeting held on October 2, 2019. It was developed to supplement ongoing management activities at each DNR boating access sites (BAS) on Higgins Lake, specifically:

- The navigating channel at North Higgins Lake State Park
- The navigational channel and lagoon at South Higgins Lake State Park
- The navigational channel at the west launch
- Request internal funding for additional CD3 stations at North Higgins and West Higgins to offer

watercraft cleaning stations at all three DNR launches in entrance and exit lanes.

- Request internal 2019 funding, \$75,000, remain in South Higgins Lake State Park budget for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) education and removal.
- AIS state workers will engage with guests entering the park in vehicles with watercraft educating them about Aquatic Invasive Species.
- Hire a new Seasonal Ranger at South Higgins with one of the duties to include oversight of the Aquatic Invasive Species/Terrestrial Invasive Species programs. In addition, this stewardship focused ranger will assist in the training and education of staff at the North and West Higgins to provide consistency in messaging at all sites.
- Chemical treatment at all three access sites, if advised by the DNR Aquatic Invasive Species biologist. A plan could include the first treatment in late spring/early summer depending on weather conditions (i.e. how long winter lasts) and plant growth. Subsequent treatments in July/August pending results of both mechanical and chemical efforts. After chemical treatment, excessive dead duff (dead plants) will be removed.
- Survey and monitoring will occur after the first chemical treatment. Mechanical harvest (via a DASH boat) will occur as plants reemerge in mid-summer depending on survey results and recommendation on best management practices from AIS experts.
- The 2018 DEQ survey results will be compared with surveys taken throughout 2020 to determine effectiveness of 2019 efforts and to realign strategy and goals as needed.
- Continued support from dedicated Parks and Recreation Division-paid Conservation Officer hours to perform AIS inspections and boater contacts at all Higgins Lake DNR sites, which may include enforcement (tickets) in 2020.

We have been assured that we will be receiving communication from our DNR-PRD partners on a weekly basis from Memorial Day to Labor Day or more often if there is news to report.

New Year's Resolutions

By "Mystery Marathoner", HLPOA Member

How many people make New Year's resolutions? How many keep them? For how long?

Nearly 45% of American adults make one or more resolutions each year. The most common New Year's resolutions are weight loss and exercise programs. After the first week 25% of the resolutions are abandoned, after two weeks 29% are abandoned, after one month

36% are abandoned and after six months 65% of good intentioned people have given up on their resolutions.

Research shows that people who explicitly make resolutions are ten times more likely to attain their goals. My resolution each year is to stay physically fit. Fitness training should include a cardio workout, weight training and flexibility exercises. My goal each year is to run a marathon (26.2 miles). I register and pay the entry fee months before the event. I share my commitment with

friends and family, and I follow a recommended training plan. This year I registered for the October 2020 Detroit Free Press Marathon on January 1st. I will also register to run the Higgins Lake Sunrise Run Half Marathon in June 2020 and schedule a run around the lake in September to test my fitness level. I find that my long-term commitment keeps me on track with the daily training requirements. I actually do not find running to be fun and I have never experienced the “runners high”. However, I am disappointed when I do not keep up with the training plan. Each year I resolve to stay physically active, as it is much easier to stay in shape than to get in shape.

My family has enjoyed summers on Higgins Lake for the past 30 years and we have recently become permanent residents. The hill training here is an essential part of my conditioning. I have only average athletic ability and was not good enough to play sports in school. I have been blessed with good knees and hips, never experiencing a serious injury. I began running as I reflected upon reaching age 30. When I started, I was huffing and puffing after running only one block. Consistency is the key and I added a little more each day to my run/walk routine. Then one day my office co-workers challenged me to sign up for a marathon. Interestingly the office bet was not about finishing but on how much weight I would lose during the race. I stepped on the scale at the start and finish lines and to everyone’s surprise dropped only one-half pound. My most memorable running experience was having the support of nine members of my family for the 2018 Boston Marathon. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate that day; with temps in the 30’s, more than two inches of rain and wind gusts of 45 mph (see the video ... www.heretocreatelegend.adidas.com I am the person with bib no. 24228, long black pants, white cap and hot pink windbreaker). My bucket list includes the six world marathon majors. I have completed the Boston, New York City and Chicago marathons and hope to someday run the London, Berlin and Tokyo marathons.

If you see me running around Higgins Lake or at the CRAF center in Roscommon, please wave me down to say hello. I would love to meet you. This “Mystery Marathoner” of Higgins Lake wishes everyone good luck with their 2020 New Year’s resolutions. **And please also resolve to send in your HLPOA dues today.**

Higgins Lake Sewer Project Update

The Higgins Lake Sewer Project currently being pursued by both Lyon and Gerrish Townships continues to move forward. The feasibility study portion has been

completed and will be submitted to the USDA for approval in January. Several steps will follow, including the creation of a Utility Authority who will then apply for grants and loans to partially offset the cost of the sewer system. <https://hlpoa.org/environmental/sewer-feasibility-study/>

Science Corner

For years studies have been done on Higgins Lake to determine the health of the lake. In an effort to verify suspected trends, Restorative Lake Sciences (RLS) collected data over the summer and fall. A comprehensive and objective study of Higgins is being conducted, including an invasive species management and ecosystem plan.

For the past two years Roscommon High School students collected, analyzed, and presented data from water samples obtained near shore on Higgins Lake (<https://hlpoa.org/higgins-lake/environmental-lake-level/water-quality/>).

Here is some terminology to assist you in understanding these studies. Levels of Oxygen (scientific symbol O), Phosphorus (scientific symbol P) and Nitrogen (scientific symbol N) in the form of Nitrates and Nitrites. Low oxygen levels prevent life in the lake. Excessive amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake create algae and aquatic plant issues. Data has also been collected on the amount of *E.Coli* (harmful bacteria from fecal animal waste), as well levels of Boron (scientific symbol B) from soaps, detergents, bleach and cosmetics.

Scientists describe the lake in trophic levels and refer the levels to the TSI index.

- Oligotrophic – clear, cold, deep water, low growth of algae
- Mesotrophic - moderately clear
- Eutrophic – algae and aquatic plant issues, excessive phosphorus and nitrogen, green water
- Hypereutrophic – dense algae, algal scum, reduced oxygen levels

Plastics in Higgins Lake?

By Melanie Brown, HLPOA Environmental Committee Member

I am sure many of us have taken a stroll along the shoreline of our beautiful Higgins Lake and have been disappointed in the amount of trash that washes up on shore, especially after a busy summer weekend. Much of the trash is plastic: plastic bottles, fishing and boating

lines, caps, Styrofoam chunks, snack food wrappers, cigarette butts, and my pet peeve, plastic tubes from fireworks. Many of us carry a bag to collect all this waste during our walk, sorting out the recyclable plastics at home and properly disposing of the rest. So, this takes care of the plastics we can see, but are there more plastics that we can't see that may occur in our lake?



Microplastics in marine and freshwater environments have become a major concern in the past few years. These types of plastics are harder to see (less than 5 millimeters) and tougher to deal with once they enter the environment compared to the plastics we may pick up along the shoreline or floating in the water. Microplastics in the water can come from a number of sources, including the decomposition of larger plastic wastes (e.g. plastic bags, bottles, fishing gear) and manufactured microplastics added to cosmetics, hand soaps, toothpastes (microbeads) and other cleaners, and fibers from our clothing and other textiles (e.g. microfleece).

Types of microplastics in the aquatic environment may vary. Early studies show that the most common types of microplastics in aquatic ecosystems are microbeads, but later studies show fibers make up most microplastics in river waters. Microplastics can enter a lake from streams and dry and wet atmospheric deposition. In addition, the wastewater from our homes likely contain microplastics from our laundry and other cleaning activities. Microplastics are found in groundwater in some areas. Septic systems may not trap all the microplastics that go down the drain, allowing some plastics to eventually flow into Higgins Lake. The half-life of these plastics can be long, with some up to 100 years.

Why are microplastics a concern in the aquatic environment?

Ingestion of microplastics by aquatic organisms can cause a series of negative health impacts, such as mechanical injury, false satiation, low growth rate, increased immune response, energy depletion, blocked enzyme production, decreased fecundity, oxidative stress, and death. Some microplastics cling to aquatic vegetation and animals. All trophic levels of the aquatic environment may ingest microplastics due to their small size. Animals higher in the food chain (predators) may eat lower trophic feeders that have plastics in or on their bodies. This may result in the plastics accumulating in the predator's body.

Are microplastics a concern in Higgins Lake?

The short answer is that we don't know. To our knowledge, no testing for microplastics in Higgins Lake has been done. If microplastics occur, it is likely they are in the water column, in sediment, and within animals that live in the lake, particularly those that are filter feeders.

In March 2019, Quinn Hughes and Tyler Clair, both seventh graders at Minnetonka, Minnesota Middle School West, presented a project titled "Microplastics in Our Water; a Study of Minnesota Lakes indicated by *Dreissena polymorpha* (zebra mussels)." They sampled zebra mussels in several lakes to determine if microplastics may be present. The zebra mussels feed by filtering water for algae and other plankton. If microplastics are present in the water, the zebra mussels may also ingest the microplastics, which then collect in their tissues. In the Minnesota study, the students extracted the plastics from the zebra mussels and sorted and counted the types of plastics found. Quinn and Tyler discovered Lake Minnetonka zebra mussels had more microplastics than Lake Superior, Lake Mille Lacs and Lake Pelican.

Because there is no shortage of zebra mussels in Higgins Lake, this method of looking for microplastics may be a good way to determine whether microplastics occur in our lake and to what extent. The baseline data would provide a better understanding of the amount and types of microplastics that may occur in the Higgins Lake food chain, potential sources, and if we need to work on reducing any risk that these microplastics may pose. A fisherman on Higgins Lake has reported lake trout stomachs containing zebra mussels, so higher trophic animals may also ingest microplastics by eating zebra

mussels. Follow up to a microplastics study would include working with a specialist on microplastics in the environment that can advise on the implications of the results and potential actions that the HLPOA may want to take, such as public education on reducing the use of products containing microplastics that may enter the lake, and additional sampling at a higher trophic level to determine potential exposure and impacts.

What are we doing nationally about microplastics?

On the national level, the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 bans "rinse-off" cosmetic products that perform an exfoliating function, such as toothpaste or face wash, but does not apply to other products. The act took effect on July 1, 2017, with respect to manufacturing, and July 1, 2018, with respect to introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce. Effective October 11, 2018, microplastic reduction legislation, as part of the Save Our Seas Act designed to combat marine pollution, supports the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine Debris Program. In particular, the legislation promotes NOAA's Great Lakes Land-Based Marine Debris Action Plan to increase testing, cleanup, and education around plastic pollution in the Great Lakes.

What can you do?

Avoid cosmetics and cleaners with microbeads. Use cleaners, scrubs, and exfoliants with natural ingredients like almonds, pumice, or oatmeal.

Take a walk and pick up plastics along the shore and in the water. Properly recycle or dispose of your collection. It will brighten everyone's day! Currently we can recycle nos. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 plastics in Gerrish Township and nos. 1 and 2 in Lyons Township.

Switch to reusable shopping bags. With just a little effort, you can develop the habit of bringing your own bags to the store. There are also reusable bags for produce available from the internet.

Avoid using disposable plates, cups and silverware. Bring your own reusable eating utensils and plates to a potluck or picnic.

Properly dispose of cigarette butts and clean up those pesky little plastic tubes after shooting fireworks.

Help us keep our membership informed. Let the HLPOA know if you have any thoughts on what the Environmental Committee should be working. Are there any environmental topics that you would like to know more about in future newsletters? Email ideas, thoughts and comments to hlpoa0@gmail.com.

Melanie has a BS from The Ohio State University in Natural Resources. After 32 years working for the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fisheries Service, she makes her summer home on Almeda Beach. If you hear the skirling of the bagpipes some summer evening during sunset, it is Melanie piping down the sun at the end of another beautiful day at Higgins Lake.

History of AMVETS Lawsuit

On October 3, 2018 the HLPOA along with the Northwest Lakeshore Property owners Association (NLPOA) filed suit in Roscommon County Circuit Court. The purpose of which is to stop the development of a major new marina to be built at the AMVETS Lodge located on the West shore of Higgins Lake. The AMVETS (not to be confused with American Legion or Camp Cornelia) is located to the south of Camp Cornelia in a residential neighborhood on Thorpe Avenue.

On July 26, 2016, despite opposition by the surrounding riparian neighbors and the HLPOA, the DEQ, now known as EGLE, approved a permit filed by the AMVETS for a marina to be built in an R-1 zoned residential neighborhood. Even though the property is zoned residential by Lyon Township it has decided not to enforce its ordinance that would prevent the development of this marina. Lyon Township is not required to enforce its own ordinances. The DEQ/EGLE has stated that it does not consider local zoning ordinances when deciding if a party qualifies for a marina permit. AMVETS refused our request to discuss the matter. The only effective recourse to enforce the law was the filing of a lawsuit against the AMVETS Lodge. The HLPOA board voted to join the adjacent property owners (NLPOA) in this lawsuit.

The case has progressed past the discovery stage and depositions are slated to begin shortly.

Cut River: Natural or Man Made

By Chuck Brick, HLPOA Board Member

Perhaps the reader has wondered about this question, as have I. Have you heard that the Cut River was created by the logging industry in the mid/late 1800's? Conversely, have you heard that the Cut River has always been there, serving as the natural outlet of the lake? Not one to turn away from a good mystery, I decided to do a bit of research into this question.



As background, the white pine logging industry in mid to northern Michigan started in earnest in the early 1850's and was initially concentrated along the shores of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron and along the lower reaches of the larger rivers that drained into them, such as the Muskegon, the Manistee, the Saginaw, the Au Sable, and others. As the big pine trees in these "easy pickings" areas were exhausted and the demand for white pine lumber increased, the logging companies began exploring more inland locations of standing white pine to fell and send to market. It wasn't until around 1875, however, that the industry eventually made its way inland, all the way to Higgins Lake, per Terry E. Jones, Central Michigan Univ., whose book, *Higgins Lake Past, Present and Future*, was published in 1991. Another book, this one entitled *The Early History of Roscommon County* by W. E. "Bill" Tudor, mentions early land surveys in Michigan that were commissioned by the General Land Office (GLO) of the Federal Government prior to 1900. One was a contract given to a Surveyor named John Brink in 1836 to lay out Roscommon County's township lines, completed in 1838. The other was a contract to re-survey the entire county given to a Surveyor named William Burt (for whom Burt Lake is named) in 1852 and completed for Gerrish Township later that same year.

The Library of Michigan and the Archives of Michigan, both located in Lansing, were key to answering the Cut River question. After providing the names of the land surveys, the Archives was able to provide a link to their searchable database that had copies of the actual Survey

Notes authored by Messrs. Brink and Burt. Survey Notes are the contemporaneous records made by the survey crew during the actual surveying activity. The William Burt Survey Notes of 1852 are more descriptive than Brink's and on pages 4 and 44 of those notes there are hand drawn maps of the entire Gerrish Township showing quite clearly the existence of a river in Section 34 exiting the southern end of Higgins Lake, into what we now call Marl Lake and continuing through Sections 35 and 36 towards Houghton Lake. This was the conclusive evidence needed! Since the references and the maps in the Burt Survey Notes of 1852 show the existence of a river where the Cut River is today and since commercial logging (and any other significant human land-altering activities) in the Roscommon County area did not begin at Higgins Lake until the mid-1870's per the Terry E. Jones book, then it is an accurate statement that the Cut River is the naturally occurring outlet of Higgins Lake that existed prior to the logging industry's arrival at Higgins Lake.



The full research on this topic, with historical maps and other documentation, is available by contacting the HLPOA Office via email and requesting an electronic copy.

Chuck is a member of the HLPOA Board. He and his wife, Linda, have owned lakefront property on Higgins Lake since 1994 and have been full time residents since 2012.

Interesting Resources Available

The Early History of Roscommon County by W.E. Tudor

The Death and Life of the Great Lakes by Dan Egan—this is available at the HLPOA office.

Erosion Information: see Michigan Shoreline

Partnership: <http://www.mishorelinepartnership.org/>

Board of Directors Elections

Elections of Directors for the HLPOA Board are held during each Annual Meeting of the Members. If you have an interest in running for a position on the HLPOA Board, please forward a short resume to hlpoa0@gmail.com or mail directly to HLPOA, Box 55, Roscommon MI 48653. Due date for all submissions is May 15, 2020. If you would like more information regarding the Board, please contact one of the current board members, Elections Committee Chair, Robert McKellar can be reached at rlmckellar@msh-iplaw.com or 989-631-4551.

Be sure to visit the HLPOA website at www.hlpoa.org for all the current information about Higgins Lake
Contact the HLPOA office 989-275-9181 or hlpoa0@gmail.com

Help Wanted

Become a Ready Volunteer: Fill often last minute, sometimes unusual, needs including mailings, Annual Meeting assistance, and more. Ready Volunteers help as needed and as available. Contact HLPOA Administrative Assistant, Kathleen, at 989-275-9181 or hlpoa0@gmail.com.

Sincere Thanks to HLPOA Donors for donations made September 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019

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Administrative Assistant - Kathleen Barger.