



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 Update
- Nutrient Loading in Higgins Lake
- Improper Disposal of Dead Leaves into Lake
- Sewer Project Update
- HLPOA History
- Pollinator Garden
- RLS Assessment Plan
- Riparian Committee Update
- Michigan Lakes & Streams Spring Webinar
- Ask the Experts
What is EGLE?
- Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz
- Sincere Thanks



circumstances, one thing which remains constant is our love for Higgins Lake and the surrounding area.

Throughout the year, work of the HLPOA Board and committees has continued as we remain committed to the mission to "preserve, protect, and enhance Higgins Lake and its surrounding watershed". In these challenging times, it's the wonderful memories we've made with our families at Higgins Lake which give us joyful anticipation as we look forward to summer.

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

President's Message

I hope this note finds you, your family and your friends safe and healthy during these unprecedented times. It is safe to say these past weeks have been among some of the most tumultuous and emotional that any of us can remember in our lifetimes. There is a great deal of uncertainty about what the coming weeks and months hold as we approach summer. In spite of the current

Membership Update

The HLPOA membership campaign for 2020 has gotten off to a strong start with approximately 10% of memberships received being from new members. Welcome aboard! As an organization we appreciate all our members and ask that you communicate your thoughts and suggestions to us. Your board members are accessible and happy to hear from you. E-mails are gladly accepted, as are voice calls.

By now you should be aware that this is the 85th anniversary of HLPOA. We should all be grateful that a group of four lakefront owners realized the need to form a property owners association to "protect the beauty and purity of Higgins Lake." In 1935 they filed the Articles of Association for the Higgins Lake Property Owners' Association which authorized them to begin business. **The purpose stated by the founding fathers was to "promote the general welfare of the owners of property on the shores of Higgins Lake, Roscommon County,**

Michigan." This is still the purpose of our organization 85 years later.

Over eight decades have passed since Art Meyer and his three friends formed HLPOA. Despite the many changes and events that have happened in the world, one thing has not changed-the beauty of our magnificent lake and the need to protect it. Let us not take it for granted.

As in 1935 the yearly membership dues are the primary source of funds for operating the HLPOA. Without your monetary support, it would fail to exist. If you haven't paid your 2020 membership dues, this is a great time to do so. Simply **send your \$100.00 check to: HLPOA, P.O. Box 55, Roscommon, MI, 48653**

Protecting our lake and our rights as lake front property owners still goes on even in these turbulent times. Thank you for your support!

Nutrient Loading in Higgins Lake

Have you seen a lake that was a soupy mess? The water is so thick with algae that you can barely see the water or other plants and you shudder to think what might be lurking in the muck? This condition of an algae choked lake is called eutrophication. A healthy aquatic ecosystem would have an amount of plant growth that provides oxygen, food, and shelter that supports other organisms. So how did the mucky lake get this way? In a word, “nutrients”.

The primary nutrients for a fresh-water aquatic system are the elements nitrogen and phosphorus. Aquatic plants, like algae, need nitrogen and phosphorus to grow. There is an abundance of nitrogen to support plant growth in fresh water so the amount of plant life is usually limited by primarily phosphorus. If additional phosphorus enters the lake from any variety of sources, it can fuel the rapid growth of algae.

Even though algae does photosynthesis and produces oxygen, only the algae at the surface are able to use the sunlight for photosynthesis. Overall excessive algae causes the oxygen levels to drop by blocking sunlight from reaching algae and other aquatic plants below the water surface. The bulk of the algae and other aquatic plants die and the bacteria breaking down the vegetation use even more oxygen, further depleting oxygen from the water. Animals in the water may need to either leave the area or may die from lack of oxygen. Higgins Lake overall has very low levels of algae as measured by chlorophyll *a* (2019 Higgins Lake Improvement Plan and Management Study). If we want to keep the lake waters clear from excess algae, we should make sure to limit the amount of nutrients (especially phosphorus) from going into the lake. For Higgins Lake, a potential significant source of nutrients is fertilizers that residents may use on their yards. You have probably seen or have a sign provided by the Higgins Lake Foundation about loving your lake and skipping the fertilizer. For folks that have reduced or stopped their fertilizing, we salute you!

Other sources of nutrients may be septic systems and tributary streams (e.g., Big Creek, Little Creek) that enter the lake. The U.S. EPA found in a 1975 study of Higgins Lake that the largest input of nutrients into Higgins Lake is direct precipitation, followed by septic systems and tributaries. Even though there is not much we can do about the rain and snow, there is something we can do about how we handle wastewater. According to a 2007 updated study of Higgins Lake by Huron Pines,

Inc., nearly all of the phosphorus and nitrogen input (99% and 97%, respectively) into Higgins Lake is from conventional septic systems. Most of these systems are likely to last about 20 years so individually most of us will need to pay a substantial amount to maintain our systems. Lyon and Gerrish Townships are working together to determine the feasibility of a Higgins Lake public sewer system. Go to <http://hlpoa.org/environmental/sewer-feasibility-study/> for a copy of the presentation on the feasibility study, including alternatives for collecting and treating wastewater. Construction on an area wide system is not likely for another 2 to 3 years and is likely to require us all to work together to make sure we preserve Higgins Lake water quality. Rather than each of us dealing alone with our septic systems, we should consider working together to preserve our beautiful lake.

The Environmental Committee is also interested in understanding the potential nutrient and other input from tributaries entering Higgins Lake. Big Creek has seasonal episodes of carrying large amounts of nutrients, sediments and debris into Higgins Lake. According to the 2019 Higgins Lake Improvement Plan and Management Study, lakes that contain total phosphorus greater than 0.02 mg/l are eutrophic or nutrient enriched. During a period of high water-flow in January 2020, a water sample from Big Creek showed total phosphorus at 4.45 mg/L. This is significantly higher than total phosphorus results from the deep basin in August 2019 (0.02-0.04 mg/L). We want to get a better understanding of the types and amounts of potential nutrients and other contaminants that may be entering Higgins Lake so we can determine what, if anything, should be done to reduce potential impacts on water quality. Working with Roscommon High School students and Raven Analytical, the Environmental Committee will coordinate additional water sampling of Big Creek and Little Creek this year. Stay tuned for our findings.

Written by Melanie Brown who worked 32 years for the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. She makes her summer home on Almeda Beach.

Improper Disposal of Dead Leaves into Higgins Lake

All Higgins Lake Riparians should know that the placing of yard waste, including dead leaves, into an inland lake (via raking, blowing, dumping, etc.) is a violation of the state’s Littering Law, as confirmed by Mr. Robert Day, Supervisor, Water Resources Div., MI Dept. of EGLE

(formerly MDEQ). If you observe someone, whether a lakefront property owner or someone acting on their behalf, who is actively raking or blowing leaves into Higgins Lake, the proper way to report this illegal littering activity is to contact:

MI Dept. of EGLE Gaylord Field Office at 989-731-4920, or Central Police Dispatch at 989-275-0911

If evidence of the activity actually taking place, such as cell phone photos or video, can be safely and discretely obtained without placing yourself in any potential confrontational situation, it would help the authorities deal more effectively with the report you make.

Below are the applicable portions of MI Compiled Laws that define littering and the penalties involved:

Michigan Laws 324.8902 – Littering property or water prohibited:

A Person shall not knowingly, without the consent of the public authority having supervision of public property or the owner of private property, dump, deposit, place, throw, or leave, or cause or permit the dumping, depositing, placing, throwing, or leaving of, litter on public or private property or water other than property designated and set aside for such purposes.

Michigan Laws 324.8901 – Definitions:

As used in this part, “Litter” means any of the following: Rubbish, refuse, waste material, garbage, offal, paper, glass, cans, bottles, trash, debris, or other foreign substances. (Yes, this does include dead leaves, grass clippings and similar yard waste.)

Michigan Laws 324.8905a – Civil infraction, civil fine:

(1) A person who violates this part, if the amount of the litter is less than 1 cubic foot in volume, is responsible for a state civil infraction and is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$800.00.

(2) A person who violates this part, if the amount of the litter is 1 cubic foot or more but less than 3 cubic feet in volume, is responsible for a state civil infraction and is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$1,500.00.

(3) A person who violates this part, if the amount of the litter is 3 cubic feet or more in volume, is responsible for a state civil infraction and is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$2,500.00. A person found to have

committed a violation described in this subsection in a subsequent proceeding is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$5,000.00.

Written by Chuck Brick who is an HLPOA Board Member and resides year round at Higgins Lake.

Higgins Lake Sewer Project Update

The Higgins Lake Sewer feasibility study has been submitted to the USDA for their review. The next step will be a meeting in Lansing with the USDA, EGLE, municipal advisers, legal counsel, Fleis and VandenBrink engineers and township officials from both Lyon and Gerrish townships. At this meeting long range planning will be discussed. The timing of this meeting has not been decided but will likely take place when the stay at home order is lifted.

Higgins Lake Property Owners’ Association History

To start at the beginning, the prime activator in the organization of the lake property owners was Arthur A. Meyer, an electrical engineer for the Detroit Edison Company. As early as 1926, Mr. Meyer was campaigning for lake welfare, preserving the beauty and purity of Higgins Lake. The need for a property owners’ association became apparent. Mr. Meyer was joined by three friends in forming the nucleus of Higgins Lake Property Owners’ Association in 1934. Those sharing with Mr. Meyer were L.B. Benkert, Paul Bruske, and C.P. Schneider. This quartet became a firm force working for realization of worthy objectives. On July 15, 1935, Articles of Association of Higgins Lake Property Owners’ Association were “duly filed” and “said Company” was authorized to commence business.

(Non-Profit) Articles of Incorporation of the Higgins Lake Property Owners’ Association were filed on January 17, 1940. The purpose stated: To promote the general welfare of the owners of property on the shores of Higgins Lake, Roscommon County, Mich. The names of the incorporators are Howard W. Peirce, M.D., A.H. Pearson, P.H. Bruske, C.P. Schneider, M.D., A.A. Meyer, and L.B. Benkert.

Descendants of two of the 1935 Articles of Association signers still enjoy summers at Higgins Lake today. The Meyer clan first settled on Almeda Beach and the Bruskes in what is now known as Pinewoods. As expected, these families have intriguing memories of their early beginnings at Higgins.

Spring 2020

They were Lawrence B. Benkert and Curt P. Schneider, M.D. Although information on these families has yet to be found, Roscommon County deed records show the Benkerts were property owners in Lyon Manor in 1919, and the Schneiders on Chicago Beach in the Southwest corner of the lake in 1936. These four were joined by Alan H. Pearson, who bought property in Highland Park in 1918, and Howard Pierce, who purchased property in Whittington Park in 1923. In 1940 Articles of Incorporation were signed by these six.

Although, at this time, little is known of several of these families, the quest for more stories continues. We owe thanks and gratitude for their foresight in laying the foundation of HLPOA as we continue to strive to “preserve, protect, and enhance the beauty of Higgins Lake and the surrounding watershed”.

Plan a Pollinator Garden

Set aside some time now to plan a small plot on your lakeside property for a small pollinator garden to attract butterflies, song birds and bees. Help Monarch butterflies by growing Milkweed. Make sure when you plan your garden to: 1. use manual tools to eliminate emissions; 2. use native plants that have adapted to Michigan’s extreme weather conditions; 3. use organic materials to improve fertility and reduce pests; and 4. patronize local, independently owned businesses. Plan your garden with the following flowering perennials (plants that return yearly):

*June: Columbine, Penstemon (beard’s tongue), Spiderwort (purple), Culver’s root, Coneflower, Butterfly Milkweed, Black-eyed Susan (biennial)

*July-September: Bee Balm, Boneset, Swamp Milkweed, Coreopsis (choose native variety), Prairie Coreopsis, Prairie Dock (yellow)

*September and beyond: Aster (purple), Blue stem Goldenrod



Lydia Dwyer, Roemelda Merz, Sadie Forster, A.A. Meyer, Ada Meyer at the old Cut River bridge in 1928.

Arthur Alexander Meyer was a 1908 electrical engineering graduate of the University of Michigan and, as family legend has it, the first with those qualifications to be hired by Detroit Edison. This reference to Detroit Edison is very relevant since Mr. William C. Miller Sr., who had a cottage on Almeda Beach, was an executive of Detroit Edison and often invited employees to visit. It’s believed that Art Meyer’s first such Miller visit occurred in 1925. The following summer, the family rented a cottage, most likely at Chaney’s Point in the Highland Park area, and purchased a 60’ lot before leaving. The Meyer cottage was built the next year, in 1927. Sometime in the 1930’s, contiguous properties were purchased so the Meyers had 300’ on Almeda Beach. Working with Paul H. Bruske, Lawrence B. Benkert, and Dr. Schneider, Art Meyer founded the Higgins Lake Property Owners’ Association, and became the first president. Several years ago, his daughter, Roberta, shared recollections of knocking on doors to recruit members!

Family members of another HLPOA founder, Paul H. Bruske, continue to enjoy life at Higgins, too. Paul was brought to Higgins Lake by his father, Reverend A. F. Bruske. Reverend Bruske was a Presbyterian minister in Saginaw. He was recruited by those in the Cottage Grove camp to travel up to Higgins to conduct Sunday services for the loggers and families in Cottage Grove. In return, Reverend Bruske was given a lot in what is currently known as Pinewoods. He subsequently purchased the lots on both sides of his, one for his daughter, the other for his son, Paul H. Bruske. Not only is Paul remembered as one of the four founders of the HLPOA, but also founded Pinewoods Camp.

Two others signed the Articles of Association of the Higgins Lake Property Owners’ Association in 1935.

An excellent resource is “Pint sized Pollinator Plot, Pint Sized Pollinators”, by Pheasants Forever, The Habitat Organization.

<https://www.pheasantsforever.org/BlogLanding/Blogs/Pheasants-Forever/Plant-a-Pint-Sized-Pollinator-Plot.aspx>)

By Becky Gibson who is an HLPOA board member and is an avid bee keeper.

HIGGINS LAKE ASSESSMENT PLAN BY RESTORATIVE LAKE SCIENCES HAS BEEN RECEIVED

At the June 10, 2019 HLPOA board meeting the board voted unanimously to enter into a contract with Restorative Lake Sciences (RLS) to conduct a comprehensive and objective baseline study of Higgins Lake. This is the most comprehensive study done on Higgins Lake and would not have been possible without the support of the membership and their financial generosity.

The 114 page report titled “Higgins Lake Improvement Study and Management Plan” was received in March 2020 by the HLPOA Board. The report will be made public on the HLPOA website for all interested parties to see and use. There will also be a public meeting with Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones at which time she will present the study and answer questions. Dates for both of these events will be announced in the near future.



Riparian Committee Update

The Riparian Committee is organized and ready to spring into action shortly after ice out. All committee members have committed to continuing to serve. The committee will be meeting in the near future to work on an agenda for an annual meeting with local law

enforcement to be held before Memorial Day. Typical topics for that meeting are the marine patrol schedule and practices, reporting of illegal overnight boat mooring at road ends and the removal of illegal mooring devices at road ends.

John Ogren is the Chairman of the Riparian committee and his email address is djogren@aol.com if you have concerns or suggestions.



Herb Weatherly's "Official Ice Out Day" April 8, 2020

**Michigan Lakes and Streams Spring Webinar
Natural Shoreline Vegetation - Become a Michigan Shoreline Steward**

Higgins Lake is one of Michigan’s over 11,000 inland lakes that are five acres or more. A major threat to inland lakes, including Higgins Lake, is loss of nearshore habitat (natural plants found along the shoreline.) Natural nearshore habitat includes tree canopy, shrub understory, and herbaceous plants (aquatic, wetland, and upland). These natural plants are uniquely designed to protect and stabilize the shoreline even from ice damage. Loss of natural vegetation provides a welcome mat for geese (easy food supply, no barriers and no hiding places for predators.) Native plants at the shoreline help prevent erosion. To learn more about healthier shorelines and how to become a Michigan Shoreline Steward checkout

https://youtu.be/bavU_tP74ew . This is a one hour webinar by Julia Kirkwood, Water Resources Division, EGLE, and State of Michigan.

Also, an excellent resource for planning your shoreline for water quality can be found at

https://vanburencd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/L4WQ_3rd-edition_2nd-printing.pdf

ASK THE EXPERTS

If you have a question about water related issues, riparian rights, and/or lakes and streams, etc., let us know by email or snail mail.

Email: swagner@mlswa.org
 Mail: The Michigan Riparian
 300 N. State St., Suite A,
 Stanton, MI 48888

Question: What is EGLE and how is it related to the MDEQ?

Answer: Many are familiar with the MDEQ or the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. You may have applied for a permit or had to report an environmental concern to the department. You may even remember a time when there was the DNRE (Department of Natural Resources and Environment) when DNR and DEQ were together in one department. Effective April 22, 2019 we now have EGLE--the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. Their mission is "to protect Michigan's environment and public health by managing air, water, land, and energy resources".

The acronym EGLE stands for the functions of the department. The "E" for Environment includes everything the department has historically done as the DEQ. You can apply for a permit and check out projects that have been permitted around you via MiWaters. You can find information on regulations and agency contacts regarding lakes, streams, and all other environmental concerns like air quality, land, waste and sustainability.

The "GL" for Great Lakes encompasses the Office of Great Lakes, now part of EGLE that came from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. As a set of two peninsulas, Michigan is surrounded by the Great Lakes, and these important bodies of water consist of one fifth of the freshwater on the surface of the Earth. EGLE works to protect and restore our water. That department provides information and resources regarding water levels, the shipping industry and much more.

The last "E" represents Energy--new to this department as the Office of Climate and Energy. Much of what this office does was previously done by the Michigan Agency for Energy. The latest news about energy in our state as well as information for residents and businesses can be found on the EGLE website.

To see all that EGLE has to offer, visit their website: <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/>

You can also check out their YouTube channel for videos about Michigan environmental topics, subscribe to their email newsletters, and follow them on Twitter - @MichiganEGLE

By Melissa DeSimone
 MLSA Executive Director

Our experts include our riparian attorney, a biologist, a limnologist, an engineer, a college professor and a state agency official. They look forward to responding to your question.

Help Wanted Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz

HLPOA Board members have volunteered to participate in Michigan's 7th annual AIS Landing Blitz on Saturday, June 27, 2020, 9:00-noon at the North State Park boat ramp. Join us as we talk to boaters and share the importance of cleaning boats and gear. Call Kathleen, (989)275-9181, and we'll be in touch. Thanks!

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

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 Elections Committee Chair, Robert McKellar. He can be reached at rlmckellar@msh-iplaw.com or 989-631-4551.



Sincere Thanks to HLPOA Donors for the Following Donations

General Fund: Dennis & Nadine Corte, Paul & Kate Duhaime, Mark Dupuie & Elizabeth Jones, Brad & Becky Gibson, Donna Hujsak, Walter & Jennie Lach, Douglas Lucey & Megan Lucey-Yax, Morley Family Cottage, Riddlemoser Cottage, Craig Trojan, Lake Shore East Condominium Association.

Environmental Fund: Barbara Cantley, Mark Dupuie & Elizabeth Jones, Dave & Mary Hall, William & Sheryl Isenstein, Mark Janulis & Robin Bonaguro, Gerald Jusco, Walter & Jennie Lach, Douglas Lucey & Megan Lucey-Yax, John Magley, Don & Barbara Richards, Denise Saunders, Garret Sisco & Lynda Wise

Legal Fund: Barbara Cantley, Dennis & Nadine Corte, Mark Dupuie & Elizabeth Jones, Dean & Karyn Elson, Dave & Mary Hall, Douglas Lucey & Megan Lucey-Yax, Cynthia Luck, Wayne & Marilyn Rendell, Don & Barbara Richards, John & Joann Rogowski, William & Linda Wichers

2019-2020 HLPOA Board: President - Charlene Cornell, Vice President - Greg Semack, Secretary - Herb Weatherly, Treasurer - Bruce Carleton. **Directors:** Chuck Brick, Wayne Brooks, Becky Gibson, Mark Lutz, Bob McKellar, John Ogren and Fred Swinehart.
Administrative Assistant - Kathleen Barger.