



Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

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

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Be sure to visit the HLPOA website at www.hlpoa.org



President's Message

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support during these unprecedented times. We value your involvement as it remains important to help protect, preserve, and enhance Higgins Lake. You are much appreciated.

Even under the current circumstances, we have been quite successful in our efforts to:

- Conduct our annual meeting by Zoom,
- Continue our student water testing program without student participants,
- Contribute funds to the Marine Patrol for the busy summer on the lake,
- Conduct water testing on Big and Little Creeks
- Continue the membership drive,
- Communicate on a regular basis to remain transparent,
- Collaborate on projects with Restorative Lake Sciences, LLC, and
- Combat Swimmer's Itch.

With school-talk on so many minds, do not let all those C's above lead you to believe we are average. This is an A+ Association, well known and respected throughout the state. Thanks to you all, to those who had the foresight 85 years ago, and to the ongoing dedication, support, and efforts throughout the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association.

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

What Does Higgins Lake Mean to You?

By Wayne Brooks

I am thankful for Higgins Lake and the opportunity that our family has had to share time together here over the years. Our story is like many of yours. We have owned our cottage for many years, 23 to be exact. It was bought when our children were young. They are grown now and live out of state. They talk excitedly about when they will be able to visit again. Now, grandchildren have come and fallen in love with the lake. It has been with our family through life's moments, some sad, some happier. As parents our memories are different from our children's. My son remembers that it was here that he watched the Red Wings win the Stanley Cup. My daughter remembers that it was here that she brought her boyfriend and, after an early morning run together, he asked me if he could marry her. You must love the difference between boys and girls.

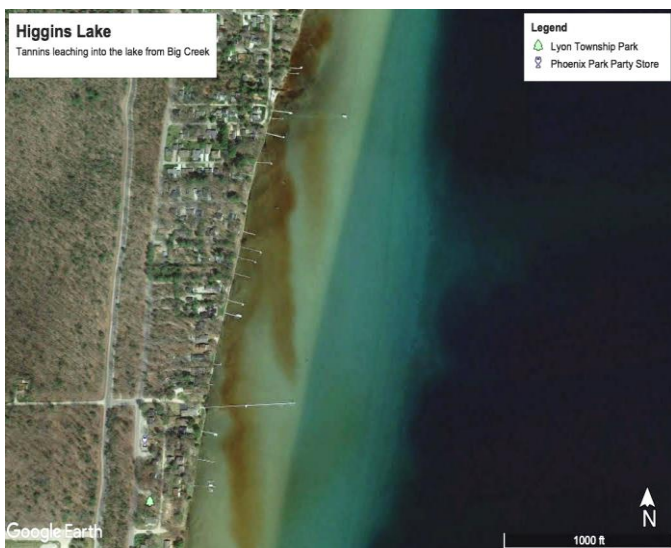
All of us are blessed to be able to spend time at Higgins Lake. For some, the time has been short, for some it was their youth, only to return as life permitted, and for some it has been their entire life. No matter what amount of time life has allowed you to be here, it is the memories that you have that can instantly bring you back. The knowledge that this beautiful lake is here, waiting for you to return, to dazzle you as if you are seeing it for the first time, for it to be a refuge. Only those who have experienced Higgins Lake understand this, do not even try to explain it.

We are living in a time of which none of us has experienced. At times it feels as if the world has lost its direction, gone crazy. Have you noticed that in the middle of all the chaos, we have been blessed with a spectacular summer? Yet as if not to be outdone, our wonderful lake has never seemed more beautiful.

We have all been touched by our times at Higgins Lake. Carry and treasure those memories and be thankful for the beauty we have here.

Do you have a story to share? What Higgins Lake has meant to you or to your family? What about your first family member who arrived at the lake or an interesting hobby associated with the lake? If so, send them to hlpoa0@gmail.com and we may include them in an upcoming newsletter.

Wayne Brooks is a HLPOA Board Member and Co-Chair of Membership and Communications Committee



Colored tannic stream water from Big Creek can be seen in pictures taken by satellite. What is invisible is the bacteria, phosphorus, nitrogen, and other nutrients that may be entering the lake.

Big Creek and Little Creek Important Sources of Water Inflow

Big Creek and Little Creek are located on the West side of Higgins Lake. They are two major sources of water entering Higgins Lake. Throughout the year, water entering the lake from these creeks turns the near-shore waters brown, giving the water an iced tea or coffee-like color. Water running through the watershed, west of the lake washes out the tannins and the dissolved organic carbon from the plants located up to miles away from the lake. This flow delivers stained water to the lake. The color is harmless, and the water could even be drinkable, although it would not have the best flavor.

The brown tannic water entering Higgins Lake is a marker that other pollutants also could be entering the

lake. Watersheds can deliver substances far worse than brown water. Septic tank effluence, bacteria, phosphorus, nitrogen, nutrients, and sediment can be carried by the streams along with the colored water. The woody sediment that has been present on the bottom land of the lake on the western shore has come from these creeks.

HLPOA continues to do water testing on Big and Little Creeks upstream and at the mouth as they enter Higgins Lake. Restorative Lake Sciences will be working with HLPOA at the end of August to gather more information at these sites as they are important sources of water for Higgins Lake. You may follow the testing results by going to hlpoa.org and select: Environmental Committee, Tributary Creeks, Springs, and Drains

The entire Restorative Lake Sciences report from 2020 may be found at hlpoa.org and select: Environmental Committee, Higgins Lake Water Quality

Environmental Committee Highlights

The Environmental Committee's section of the hlpoa.org website contains several items of newsworthy information that we would encourage the reader to consider.

First, we have added a new category to this portion of the website, *Tributary Creeks, Springs, and Drains*. The focus here will be on water quality issues that arise from sources that adversely affect the nearby lakeshore waters. A program of analysis has begun and the first of several data records is included there. Notice particularly that the Big and Little Creeks are sources of a lot of tannic staining, which is benign, and the source of a lot of phosphorous and general coliform contamination, which is not! Since these are flowing streams, and we have only so far measured the

contents at points in time, we need to determine the flow rates at the time of measurement to determine the actual amounts of material and coliforms entering the lake. A combined effort of flow measurement and analysis is scheduled to take place toward the end of August.

Second, in the *Higgins Lake Water Quality* section, the near shore student water sampling results for May and June are shown. The July data will be posted soon. One key point to observe from these data sets is that the general coliform content is quite high but not dangerously so. However, and importantly, the nitrogen content is undetectable at all sites in the June report. With warming waters, the phytoplankton and algae are consuming all available nitrogen. Their growth is thus phosphorous limited, and any phosphorous coming into the lake from septic leaching or lawn fertilization will actively promote increased and undesirable algae growth. One sign of this is clearly visible on rocky shorelines where often a green slimy growth can appear. Another is the brownish cloudy suspension that one can often see near shore, depending on the wind direction and wave action of the moment.

To better define this situation, the committee was authorized by the Board to acquire some equipment for the enhancement of the Roscommon Area Public High School's microscope capability. These items will allow the students, with assistance from committee members and school science staff, to photograph and identify the various species of organisms they will collect. The results of these future studies will be published on our website also.



Water Testing

Restorative Lake Sciences Q & A

Last summer the HLPOA contracted with Restorative Lake Sciences to do a comprehensive study of Higgins Lake. The study dealt with water quality, invasive species, ecosystem improvement and lake management. The following is excerpted from a follow up meeting the HLPOA Board had with Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones, President of Restorative Lake Sciences

1. What is the most important issue on Higgins Lake to address?
Stopping the spread of AIS at the south State Park boat launch, by far. Dashboat harvesting is the plan Jennifer sees as being most successful path to eliminating EWM and SSW. Implementing that is her recommendation as first priority to solving AIS in general and AIS in the lagoon specifically. The Lagoon should be our first concern in her opinion.

2. Is there anything out of the box that you can suggest that would be successful at stopping AIS at the DNR sites? Could dredging and coating the bottom of the lagoon with a membrane to prevent regrowth be a solution?
Dredging by itself is not suggested as plant seeds will still be able to give life to new growth. I have never seen a membrane being used for this. Dashboat harvesting is my best idea for managing the lagoon for control of Milfoil and SSW. Effort needs to get it all in the same time, working until the entire lagoon is completed. If not, nothing is being accomplished. The transfer to the lake will continue. Once eradicated as well as possible, close monitoring should be part of constant maintenance. If this would have been done sooner, it would have prevented new AIS colonies and been easier to manage. It is already past maintenance stage.

3. What if a homeowner was creating a problem similar to that the DNR is causing with Invasive Species infesting the lagoon and being dragged into the lake?
No question that the DEQ (EGLE) would be all over that, but they will not police other state agencies.

4. Are there other state agencies that we could expect to help us influence the implementation of safe practices at launch sites?
In my opinion it would be difficult to get other state agencies to engage with the DNR. They have a tendency not to want to delve into other agency business. I will look into putting together a coalition of stake holders with Senators Dale Zorn and Curt VanderWall, among others, in order to be able to help support our position.

5. What are your concerns about the boat washing process and how could it be improved at the DNR sites?

There needs to be mandatory boat washing and enforcement for all boats, especially those leaving with weeds on their boats and trailers. Boat washing is critical, or the growth of Invasive Species will not end.

6. Do you see newer improved Dashboat technology that will make a difference?

Newer boats might be more efficient, but if handled correctly, any dash work should be effective.

7. From water testing, it appears as though Big Creek is sending high levels of Phosphorous into the lake. Will you address this?

This could be due to much rain and soil saturated conditions earlier in the year which then allow surface flow into the creeks. This will contribute to higher levels of phosphorous due to decaying plant material on the ground.

8. Green algae are forming near Big Creek. What could be causing this?

This could be a product of the same soil saturated conditions causing surface flow into the creek.

9. We would like to discuss flow rate monitoring with you as we think your equipment might be a big help at determining pollution inflows of Big Creek.

RLS has equipment that automatically calculates the number of contaminants using flow rate and would be happy to set up a monitoring of this with you as a future project.

10. What do you see as the best attack plan for HLPOA and RLS collaboratively?

Problems have been identified, now we need to determine our next prioritized steps. RLS is now totally familiar with the issues facing Higgins Lake and can intelligently suggest the ways to address these as they are prioritized. Once HLPOA determines the direction for RLS involvement, RLS can work up a plan and cost for implementation.

11. What part would RLS play if our goal were to eliminate AIS in the lagoon?

RLS would oversee DASH boat use and assess results at completion. RLS would need to be introduced to the DNR as representing the Association, and then would negotiate what can be done and oversee the work while it is being completed.

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association Meeting July 18, 2020

During the current COVID 19 health situation, Higgins Lake Property Owners Association held its Annual Meeting on July 18, 2020, virtually by Zoom. We celebrated the 85th anniversary of HLPOA by acknowledging four friends, Arthur A. Meyer, Paul Bruske, Lawrence Benkert, and Curt P. Schneider, who, in 1935, saw the need to form our Association.

As required by the HLOPA bylaws, it was established that a quorum was present. Approval of the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes followed. Bruce Carleton, Treasurer, reviewed the financial information provided in the Annual Meeting packet. There being no Board member nominations, the four incumbents, Charlene Cornell, Becky Gibson, Greg Semack, and Fred Swinehart, will continue serving on the Board.

Charlene Cornell reminded members to stay informed by checking the website, newsletters, Facebook, and email blasts.

Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization

Here is a mid-July update on what your Swimmer's Itch program has been involved with for 2020:

Dr. Curt Blankespoor surveyed the lake on June 16th looking for Merganser broods we would plan to relocate. What he found this year was stunning. For the first time since our program began 6 years ago, there were no Merganser ducks to found on Higgins Lake. We had reports earlier in the season about Mergansers being seen on the lake, but it was at a time where migratory fly-throughs were taking place. Although there is still time where Merganser broods could appear, at least so far, there are no broods to be found.

We ask that everyone be vigilant and report any Common Merganser broods sighted yet this season as soon as possible on our website www.hlsio.org.

There was a bit of disappointing news when we were informed that the state would not grant us a permit this season to relocate Canada Geese. The cited reasons included budget concerns due to increases in state spending due to Covid-19 expenses, and state restrictions as per the governor's executive orders. We are already looking to next year with an eye on making sure that the state understands the importance of our program and its place in fighting the health issues that the geese create. It is our intention to pursue goose relocation in the future and we will be making contacts with the appropriate parties prior to next season to do all we can to regain our permit in 2021.

The last thing we want to bring to everyone's attention is the result of our latest round of snail infection research. On July 8th Dr. Blankespoor was once again working on Higgins Lake, this time to collect and analyze snails for SI infection. In collecting and analyzing over 2000 snails at 10 sites, he did not find one that was infected with SI-producing parasites. When our project started in 2015, our snail infection rate was 2.9% and considered epidemic. In the following year that percentage had dropped to .5%, still considered severe but much improved. In subsequent snail surveys the infection rate had been reduced to very minor levels that were considered ideal. That none of the snails in this year's study were infected is another incredible statement.

Though the nature of the threat is such that we cannot guarantee that we will be totally free of Swimmer's Itch cases this summer, nor can we say that we may not yet have Merganser broods on Higgins Lake in 2020, the news thus far is about as good as can be expected for this time of the year. Our goal to maintain significantly reduced SI incidents is being met.

Thanks again for your past assistance. Your efforts as HLSIO supporters have given back the enjoyment of Higgins Lake to our community. Today's update is full of good news and is due to your participation in this effort.

Your HLSIO Board

Bill Carey, Neal Cooley, Dale McDonald, Ed Nellist, John Ogren, Greg Semack, Bob Schneider, Dianne Wagner

www.hlsio.org



South State Park



Charlene Cornell, President HLPOA, presents Deputies Ron Bradley and Jaron Sylla of Roscommon County Marine Patrol a \$1,000 donation in support of marine patrol on Higgins Lake.

Higgins Lake Shoreline Erosion Survey

The Higgins Lake Property Owners Association would appreciate your response to the following survey concerning shoreline erosion around our lake. Please consider replying even if you are not a member of the HLPOA. By way of

Board of Directors News: Chuck Brick resigned his HLPOA board position in July, 2020. We thank him and wish Chuck well in his future endeavors.

If you are interested in filling this vacant seat or would like to talk with a Board member about what it's like to serve, please contact Kathleen at the HLPOA office and a Board member will contact you promptly. Office 989-275-9181 or hlpoa0@gmail.com

Be sure to visit the HLPOA website at www.hlpoa.org to find Board Minutes, financial information, Annual Meeting reports, committee updates, contact information, past newsletters and links to sites of interest for riparians.

Contact the HLPOA office 989-275-9181 or hlpoa0@gmail.com

Like us on FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/higginslakepropertyownersassociation>

WHAT CAN I DO?

Invite your friends and neighbors to join HLPOA. Dues provide funding and voices provide valuable input.

Volunteer, the more hands, the easier the tasks. The more minds, the richer the ideas. You do not need to be a full-time resident to help. Board members can even attend meetings remotely. On-call volunteers can help with one-time or infrequent tasks.

Do you have an area of special interest? Environmental? Legal? PAC? Join a committee or donate to a fund.

Do you have an area of expertise? Technology? Graphics? Social Media?

Contact hlpoa0@gmail.com to volunteer.

Sincere Thanks to the following Donors

General Fund: John Allaben, Dennis & Tine Doyle, Fisher Body Post #183 of Lansing, Gail Lynch & Catherine Markland, Sarah Olson

Environmental Fund: John Allaben, Camp Curnalia, Dennis & Tina Doyle, Higgins Lake West Association, Brian Lamerson & Sandra Kneller, George & Terry McIntosh, John Ogren, Sandra Olson, Annette Rappleyea, Paul & Eve Ryznak.

Legal Fund: John Allaben, Dennis & Tina Doyle, Brian Lamerson & Sandra Kneller, Sandra Olson.

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

Administrative Assistant - Kathleen Barger.