



## 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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### President's Message



vintage maps available. Order with your dues remittance or through Kathleen at the office.

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

As the sun slowly moves toward summer, the HLPOA Board and committees continue our efforts to preserve, protect, and enhance Higgins Lake. New projects are planned, and current ones are expanded. Enjoy reading the news here. Many thanks to those of you who have already supported these efforts by joining, as that is quite helpful for our 2021 budgeting. Please consider joining by January 31 to assist in this process. There are still a few

**What is a Kettle Lake?** In the fall HLPOA newsletter, we referenced Higgins Lake as a kettle lake. Here is an explanation written by Tony Groves, a water resources professional with 25 years' experience working with lake communities. Tony has recently been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Michigan Chapter North American Lake Management Society (McNALMS). The remainder of this article, along with other articles, can be found on the website: [michiganlakeinfo.com](http://michiganlakeinfo.com).



### Back to The Future: A Perspective on History and Events That Shaped Michigan's Lakes and Streams

This article provides an overview of historical events that transformed Michigan's lakes and streams. It is not intended to be a comprehensive account of history, but rather focuses on past events and activities that directly impacted Michigan's lakes and streams. It is hoped this article will provide the reader a perspective of Michigan history and the rapid pace at which change can occur.

**The Glaciers:** In The Beginning The Great Lakes and the inland lakes and streams of Michigan are a product of glacial activity that ended about 10,000 years ago. In all, Michigan experienced four distinct glacial advances and retreats. At times, the glacial ice mass was well over a mile thick and so massive that it depressed the earth's crust. Lands in Canada were depressed to a level that the Great Lakes drained north and were lowered several hundred feet below present day levels. Conversely, as the glaciers retreated and the land rebounded, water began to drain back to the lakes and the water levels rose dramatically. These major fluctuations in the levels of the Great Lakes occurred in a relatively brief period that ended only about 3,000 years ago. The glaciers that covered Michigan plowed and sculpted the land creating the hills, valleys, soils, and water features that exist today. With the final retreat of the glaciers, Michigan was left with over 26,000 inland lakes and ponds greater than an acre, nearly 42,000 miles of rivers and streams, and over 4,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline. Many inland lakes are "kettle lakes" that were created when large blocks of ice were shed from retreating glaciers. In some parts of Michigan, such as the area from Oakland to Jackson Counties, thousands of kettle lakes exist. Houghton Lake, the largest lake in the state, is a kettle lake.

## Short Term Rentals

During the past summer season, HLPOA received complaints from some members about short-term rentals in their neighborhoods. The complaints had to do with related road end issues, such as boat mooring, parking, and partying. Many complaints occurred on the busiest weekends.

Neither Gerrish nor Lyon Townships has an ordinance to regulate short-term rentals. However, Gerrish Township has undertaken a project to encourage owners of rental properties to improve communications with renters. Excerpts from a letter to rental property owners from Brian Hill, Gerrish Township Chief of Police follows:

*The purpose of this correspondence is to reach out to you proactively to educate you and your prospective short term tenants about certain statutes and ordinances in our community.*

*Gerrish Township has not chosen to regulate short term rentals nor impede your AirBnB, VRBO or self-managed rental market. We are asking that you share the enclosed to clearly make those short term tenants aware of the things that are perceived as irritants at times in our community and yet have a place here.*

*There are two primary concerns in our area that are in need of your assistance. The first is the proper operation of ORV's on the roadways governed by the Roscommon County ORV Ordinance #4 and the existence of the State statute of Public Act56 which prohibits the overnight mooring of watercraft at public lateral road ends that traverse into Higgins Lake. Copies of both are available on our website at [www.gerrishpolice.org](http://www.gerrishpolice.org).*

Lyon Township does not have a police department, but the newly elected Township Supervisor, Fred Koenigbauer, agreed to work with us on a similar communication project. Our Riparian Committee will take on the task of providing the street addresses of short-term rental properties and the township will handle the communication with the property owners. **The committee will appreciate your help in finding the street addresses for any short-term rentals you are aware of in either township.** (We will pass along the Gerrish Township address to Chief Hill for any additions to his data base.)

Many of the properties are pictured on web sites of Airbnb and VRBO, but addresses are not given unless a booking is made. Maps of the general area are provided for the individual listings and, when enlarged, may indicate the street name but not the number. A drive-by is usually needed to match up the picture to the street address.

Please email your responses to [hlpoa0@gmail.com](mailto:hlpoa0@gmail.com). This is an open-ended request with no deadline, however, sooner is better than later. We will build a data base of responses which will be made available to the townships on an ongoing basis. Thanks in advance for your help.

## Hidden Treasure in Big Creek

A few of our local fishermen may know about the Brook Trout in Big Creek, but there are more than just Brookies lurking in the sheltered stream eddies. A recent Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) fish survey has revealed much more.

Big Creek is the largest stream supplying water to Higgins Lake. It is located on the NW side of the lake, crossing under Dewey Avenue and under Treasure Blvd before entering Higgins Lake. Big Creek is a MDNR Designated Type 1 Trout Stream, open to all gear types and open to fishing from the last Saturday in April through September 30. The minimum size limits are 7" for Brook Trout, 8" for Brown Trout, and 10" for Rainbow Trout. No more than three trout over 15 inches may be kept.

In March 2020, Mark Tonello of the MDNR Fisheries Division provided a Fisheries Survey Report of Big Creek, including historical and 2019 survey results on the fish species occurring in Big Creek. Among other fish species, the three types of trout found in Big Creek are Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout.



Brook Trout



Rainbow Trout



Brown Trout

So how did these trout species get into Big Creek? Records show that Big Creek was stocked with Brook Trout fry and fingerlings in 1905 and in 1937, respectively. A 1927 state survey of Big Creek showed Brook Trout, but no other comprehensive survey is reported until the MDNR 2019 survey. Because there is no further record of stocking in Big Creek, it is likely that the Brook Trout are a self-sustaining population. Of the trout found in the 2019 survey, only the Brook Trout were found of legal size for harvesting.

There is no record of Rainbow or Brown Trout stocking in Big Creek. Higgins Lake is one of the handful of inland lakes in Michigan designated as a trout lake due to deep, cold waters. Because of this excellent cold-water habitat, the state has, for years, stocked Higgins Lake with trout species, including Brown and Rainbow Trout. Trout stocked in a lake may travel up streams to find colder locations when lake waters warm. It is likely that the Rainbow and Brown Trout found in Big Creek are hatchery fish added to Higgins Lake. At least one of the Rainbow Trout found in Big Creek was too small to be a hatchery fish, so it is likely from natural reproduction. Of the trout found, the Rainbows were the most abundant followed by the Brook Trout and Brown Trout.

Nine other species of fish were found in the Big Creek 2019 survey. The most abundant were Brook

Sticklebacks at 104 fish. A single Mottled Sculpin and a few Iowa and Johnny Darters were found along with six Northern Redbelly Daces. The trout are not the only carnivorous fish in Big Creek as MDNR also found four Rock Bass in the 2019 survey.

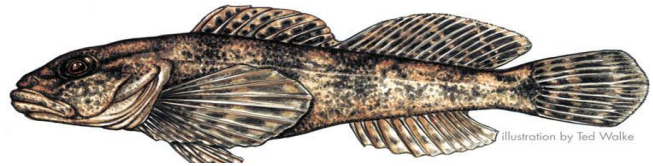
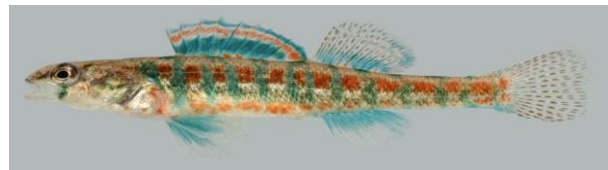


illustration by Ted Wolke

Mottled Sculpin



Iowa Darter



Johnny Darter



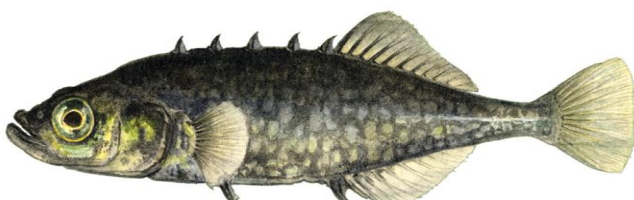
Northern Redbelly Dace



Central Mudminnow



Rock Bass



Brook Stickleback



Finding such a variety of fish species in a relatively short section (958 feet) of Big Creek indicates that there is a dynamic and diverse environment in this stream. These fish species eat a variety of vegetation, insects, other invertebrates, and other fish and need a healthy ecosystem to support such a variety of diets. It is a good indication of the potential for further improvement to the ecology of the stream with the planned removal of the perched culvert on Dewey Avenue to allow fish movement throughout the length of Big Creek.

For more details on the 2019 fish survey by MDNR, please visit the HLOPA website at [hlopa.org](http://hlopa.org). See the following article on the planned work to remove the perched culvert. Restoring the fish habitat in Big Creek will leave future generations with a treasure of a diverse and healthy stream ecosystem.

## Big Creek Remediation Project 2020 Progress Report

Since the summer of 2019, the Environmental Committee has been working to better understand the impact that Big Creek has on the fishery and ecology of Higgins Lake. Mark Tonello, from the Cadillac Office of the DNR Fisheries Division, did an electrofishing survey of the creek from its outlet into the lake up 900' to the perched culvert on Dewey Road. The placement of this culvert prevents spawning activity for perch, pike, trout, and other important species to take place upstream from this culvert. It also divides trout and other wild species into separate populations, which is very harmful to maintaining healthy populations. A copy of his formal report is available on [hlopa.org](http://hlopa.org), Environmental drop-down menu under Tributary Creeks, Springs, and Drains.

Other problems to solve on Big Creek are associated with bank erosion, septic effluent leaching, and leaf and stick pollution from surrounding areas. However, the first order of business is to replace the perched culvert with one designed and placed properly to restore free passage of aquatic species up and down the creek. This would open several miles of good spawning habitat, especially for perch and trout moving from the lake upstream. The pictures here show what exists at Dewey Road now and what an improved culvert design and placement would probably look like.

Dewey Road is a Lyon Township road. The agreement between the township and the Roscommon County Road Commission (RCCC) requires Lyon Township approval to



allow the RCCC to work on culverts over 48" in diameter, which a successful remediation project would require.

It is our present understanding that both parties are in agreement to do this work, providing that outside funding is secured to pay for the effort.

To that end, three large Higgins Lake organizations, the Higgins Lake Foundation, the Higgins Lake Land Conservancy, and the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association have each committed \$10,000, for a total of \$30,000, in support of this most worthy conservation project.

We have identified the Huron Pines Conservancy as the fiduciary agent for collecting funds and managing the execution of the effort. They have assigned Josh Leisen, their senior project manager to be in charge of obtaining any additionally needed grant funding from various private, governmental and conservation agencies. Generally speaking, such agencies prefer a 1:1 local funds match. We feel the prospects of obtaining such support in the near future will take place, and that the culvert replacement project might be thus be completed in the late 2021 construction season.

## Wrapping up Swimmer's Itch 2020

The Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization's (HLSIO) year-end report based on the 2020 work done by Swimmer's Itch Solutions (SIS) on Higgins Lake is now available both on the HLPOA and the HLSIO websites ([hlpoa.org](http://hlpoa.org) and [hlsio.org](http://hlsio.org)). Please check out the report to see the activities that were conducted in the 2020 season and the SIS conclusions.

If there were a highlight to 2020, it may be that Higgins Lake saw no Common Merganser broods on the lake. This contributed to another season of exceptionally low incidences of Swimmer's Itch.

Our goals, at the beginning of the season, were to continue to do the things that have been successful for us in the past and to do the things necessary to be able to continue our successful program in the future. To this end, we once again contracted with SIS, Dr. Curt Blankespoor and Dr. Randy DeJong, to be in charge of monitoring lake-wide swimmer's itch (SI) conditions and addressing the remedies to minimize SI at Higgins Lake.

We conducted two studies this summer to assess the infection of snails, which are the source of the parasite that causes SI. On July 8, SIS examined 2063 Stagnicola snails, the species that pairs with common merganser ducks, and found none to be infected. This study was confirmed later in the summer when members of the HLPOA Environmental Committee collected water samples at 8 locations, on four different dates, for Quantitative PCR (qPCR) analysis. While some samples showed a slight indication of DNA signal, the results also indicated that the existence of SI parasites was negligible.

A second snail study was done this summer, as there has been recent evidence that Canada Geese and Helisoma snails can possibly introduce a SI parasite. We examined 257 Helisoma snails collected lake-wide and found that none of these snails were infected. This was especially good news because we were not permitted, this summer, to do Canada Geese relocation, as we had in the previous two years, due to state restrictions based on COVID concerns. We believe the potential for SI from Canada Geese is low, based on the snail infection level that was found, but we still intend to relocate Canada Geese in the future to minimize potential of SI to the Higgins Lake community.

Looking ahead, we had new relocation sites assessed for DNR approval to ensure our ability to relocate

mergansers in the future. The cost of this assessment was shared by Crystal Lake as their interests parallel our own to be able to maintain an ongoing trapping and relocation program.

## Windlit on Higgins Lake



My grandfather, who went by Archie Watson, built a summer cottage on Almeda Beach in 1930. Or perhaps I should say, began building, because that cottage has been expanded and improved ever since. Grandpa Watson was born in 1884 on the farm in Canada and came to Detroit as a young man. Resourceful, smart, and

hardworking, he ended up as the president of Detroit Hoist and Machine Company. As a part-time inventor, it seemed his active mind was always working on projects. Years ahead of his time, he foresaw that parking would become a problem and he patented a design for a large multi-story parking garage using a hoist system to lift cars into their spots. But that's another story.

No sooner was the cottage livable when the improvements began. As a longtime appreciator of wind power, he had seen its value on the farm pumping water for the livestock. Using his knowledge of electricity, he designed a windmill, or more accurately, a wind-generator, to charge a bank of 6 volt car batteries. He then wired the cottage with some small 6 volt light bulbs. And *voilà* – there was light at night. This reduced the dangers from the open flame of candles and kerosene lanterns. It was estimated that they were the only ones within 100 miles that had electric lights at night. So of course, he named the cottage – **Windlit**. Lit by the power of the wind. And the name endures to this day.





Further tinkering included switching to a 2 bladed airplane type propeller for better electricity generation. Then later on when the electric company came in with power, he converted the wind-generator to a wind-pump which pumped lake water to the cottage tanks for

washing and cleaning. This too eventually became obsolete by an electric water pump. He also experimented with a barrel style anemometer to monitor wind speed (see photo).

*Article written by Jamie Brown*



## Acronyms...

**HL** - Higgins Lake - Michigan's 10th largest lake known for its deep and clear waters

**HLPOA** - Higgins Lake Property Owners Association - one of Michigan's oldest lake associations dedicated to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Higgins Lake and its surrounding watershed

**HLF** - Higgins Lake Foundation - non-profit organization promoting ecologically sound projects and practices for the protection of Higgins Lake and the surrounding watershed

**HLSIO** - Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization - non-profit organization combating public health problem of Swimmer's Itch in Higgins Lake

**HLCC** - Higgins Lake Land Conservancy - non-profit corporation formed to acquire, sell, and manage lands solely within Higgins Lake watershed and surrounding areas in a manner which promotes prudent environmental use and conservation of the Higgins Lake area

**AIS** - Aquatic Invasive Species - species that threaten the health and vitality of Michigan waters (examples: zebra mussels, quagga mussels). AIS compete with native species for food and habitat, disrupt aquatic food webs, and impact water quality

**IS** - Invasive Species - living organism, not native to an ecosystem, which causes harm (Eurasian Water Milfoil {**EWM**} and Starry Stonewort {**SSW**})

**PAC** - Political Action Committee - committee to assist HLPOA members in keeping our lake issues in focus for government

**MILP** - Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership - group of organizations that collaborate to advance stewardship of Michigan's lakes, and host the Michigan Inland Lakes Convention

**MLSA** - Michigan Lakes and Streams Association - non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, protection and wise management of Michigan's inland lakes and streams

**MWA** - Michigan Waterfront Alliance - non-profit corporation dedicated to the creation or preservation of state laws and/or policies designed to protect, preserve, and promote the sustainable use of inland water resources in the State of Michigan

**EGLE** - State of Michigan, Department of Environment Great Lakes & Energy - mission is to protect Michigan's environment and public health by managing air, water, land, and energy resources

**DNR** - State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources - committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. **DNR/PRD** - DNR Parks and Recreation Division

**SIS** - Swimmer's Itch Solutions, LLC - team control program used successfully on several lakes in Michigan. Program involves capturing and treating infected ducks and releasing them unharmed, but on a lake where the snail intermediate hosts are not present

**SI** Swimmer's Itch - dermatitis occurring when parasite dies at the site of penetration causing inflammation of the skin and the formation of a papule (can itch intensely for up to ten days).

## Resources for Members:

# 2020 Michigan Inland Lakes Convention Conserving Lakes in a Changing Environment



### Link to conference sessions:

Every two years we bring together lake enthusiasts, researchers, managers, and educators. The Convention is hosted by the [Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership](#), a collaboration of diverse organizations with a common mission to advance stewardship of Michigan's inland lakes. We convened online, September 16-18, 2020, to learn and share the latest innovations and ideas in lake stewardship, and to network with others who share our passion for lakes! The 2020 theme was "Conserving Lakes in a Changing Environment". The [Convention program](#) featured three full days of workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities.

*Session Recordings:* Most Convention sessions were recorded. These video recordings are now available and are found on the Convention pages for [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), and [Friday 2020](#), respectively.

### Link for EGLE Webinar:

**February 16, 2021, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

## Ahoy, Boaters! Resources to help prevent the introduction and spread of AIS

Recreational boating, paddling and water sports are extremely popular in Michigan, but they also can introduce and spread aquatic invasive species in Michigan's lakes, rivers and streams. Fortunately, the Clean Boats, Clean Waters and MI Paddle Stewards programs are here to help. With free classes, signage, outreach materials and grants, both programs serve as resources for boaters, recreational groups, local communities and property owners working to keep Michigan's waters free from invasive species. Presenters Paige Filice, Natural Resources Educator at Michigan State University Extension, and Mary Bohling, Extension Educator at Michigan Sea Grant, will share resources and information about their programs and answer questions.

**Membership Renewal:** Thank you to the many members who have already renewed memberships for 2021. The annual membership of \$100, due each year by Jan. 31, is, by far, the income which funds the HLPOA activities. If the HLPOA membership envelope mailed to you in December has disappeared, a membership form can be found at [hlpoa.org](http://hlpoa.org): click "Member News & Info" scroll down to "Membership Application" open page and print. You may also email [hlpoa0@gmail.com](mailto:hlpoa0@gmail.com) or call 989-275-9181 and Kathleen will help. Members joining HLPOA by January 31, 2021, will be entered in our annual drawing for HLPOA's Membership Drive's Gift Basket.

**Board News:** Welcome to our newest board member, Jack Cornell. Jack has served on the Finance Committee over the past several years, as well as a former HLPOA Board member. Thank you, Jack.

### Special Thanks...

Thank you to Sally Voorheis and Dealers Supply Company for their assistance with HLPOA's membership drive and directory advertising mailings. Thank you Randy and Patti Haight for covering the costs of printing and folding materials for the prospects bulk membership mailing.

## Sincere Thanks

The following have generously donated funds to support the HLPOA and its endeavors November 9, 2020 through January 11, 2021:

**GENERAL FUND:** Robert & Michelle Angst, Irene Bacsanyi, William and Katherine Beuer, Janet Bokros & Kurt Bard, Barbara Cantley, Rick & Andrea Castanos, Evelyn Dinu, Dennis & Tina Doyle, Mark & Kathryn Duhaime, Jeff & Laura Edwards, Lois B. Elliott, Patricia Emmenecker & Hall Families, Suzanne Fabian, Jeff & Michelle Gardner, John & Amy Gregorio, Donald Hanson, Randon & Patricia Haight, Thomas & Lynne Hoffmeyer, Laurence Leighton, Mark & Gail O'Brien, Steven & Cynthia Popp, Mark & Barbara Richter, Denise Saunders, Pat & Vicki Springstead, Dave & Linda Udy, John & Sue Vandenberg, Mark & Ginny Yuschak

**ENVIRONMENTAL FUND:** Robert & Michelle Angst, Janet Bokros & Kurt Bard, Robert & Carrie Blamer, Vernon & Karen Boyajian, Ed & Judy Brown, Pat & Megan Butcher, Bruce & Julie Carleton, Barbara Cantley, Rick & Andrea Castanos, James Clarke, Dennis & Nadine Corte, Jeff & Laura Edwards, Glenn & Jane Fausz, Tom & Michelle Foster, Cameron & Tracy Freeman, Judy George, Brad & Becky Gibson, Frank & Emily Gobright, Dave & Mary Hall, Wayne Hall, Robert & Annie Joubnan, Kevin & Anne Kleinsmith, Laurence Leighton, Paul & Beth Lux, Constance MacClaren, James & Victoria McCarthy, George & Terry McIntosh, Gary & Paula Pritchard, Annette Rappleyea, Wayne & Marilyn Rendell, Dr. Roger & Cathy Spalding, Ron & Michelle Spisak, Pat & Vicki Springstead, Fred Swinehart, Edward & Deanna Taylor, Julia Townsend-Dunn, Craig Trojan, Gary Wales, Robert & Mary Louise Warne, Frank & Maureen Yaquinto, James & Diana Young, Mark & Ginny Yuschak

**LEGAL FUND:** Robert & Michelle Angst, Jim & Carole Bell, Janet Bokros & Kurt Bard, Randy Bierlein & Tracy Weber, Larry & Judy Beckert, Barbara Cantley, Bruce & Julie Carleton, Dennis & Nadine Corte, Jeff & Laura Edwards, Tom & Michelle Foster, Robert & Lynne Frye, Dan & Nannette Guggemos, Don & Marie Heys, Dr. & Mrs. Larry LaLonde, Laurence Leighton, Cynthia Luck, Constance MacClaren, Don & Barbara Richards, Wayne & Marilyn Rendell, Kimberly Roberson & Carroll Baker, John & Joann Rogowski, Ron & Michelle Spisak, Edward & Deanna Taylor, Julia Townsend-Dunn, Robert & Mary Louise Warne, William & Linda Wichers II, Mark & Ginny Yuschak

We are continuing to minimize group meetings due to Covid 19.

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



A few maps are still available for purchase.  
Order your 1936-1937 Map of Higgins Lake.  
(Map only, mat and frame not included)

### Looking for a great gift or addition to your lake decor?

Exclusive to Higgins Lake 2021 Property Owners Association members...Vintage 1930's map of Higgins Lake suitable for framing. Celebrate HLPOA's 85th anniversary of protecting, preserving and enhancing the quality of Higgins Lake and its surrounding watershed.

Please submit \$50.00 to further support our organization and receive your 14" x 11" print. Make Checks payable to HLPOA.

Number of Prints requested \_\_\_\_\_ x \$50.00 = Total for prints \_\_\_\_\_

Send Prints to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_