



# Higgins Lake Property Owners Association<sup>SM</sup>

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**President:** Charlene Cornell, **Vice Pres:** Greg Semack, **Secretary:** Herb Weatherly, **Treasurer:** Bruce Carleton  
**Directors:** Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

Board Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2021

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:02 A.M.

**Board Members Present:** Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Bruce Carleton, Herb Weatherly, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, Bob McKellar, Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Fred Swinehart, and Curt DeVoe.

**Agenda:** Greg asked to add the HLF meeting under new business and short-term rentals under PAC. Charlene asked to add sewer meeting attendees under new business.

**President's Comments:** None.

**June Minutes:** The June 21, 2021, Minutes were accepted as written.

**July Annual Minutes:** The July 17, 2021, Annual Minutes were accepted as written and will be presented at the 2022 annual meeting for approval.

**July Minutes:** The July 17, 2021, Minutes were accepted as written.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** None.

**Treasurer's Report:** The financials through June 30, 2021, and through July 31, 2021, were presented. Bruce noted that the legal fund has increased in July, due to the AMVETS solicitation letter. Also, the \$820.00 expense for the boat tags was entered under the marine support category. This expense will be reflected in the August statement.

**Membership/Communication:** Wayne reported we have 519 members and are budgeted at 520.

Wayne shared that the committee is preparing the next newsletter and asked that articles be turned in by August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Wayne then stated that the last directory advertising check was received.

Becky shared that she has extensively updated our website and asked that committee chairs review their sections. For Facebook and our newsletter, Charlene asked Becky to meet with John regarding the boat tags and PA 56 signs.

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**Riparian Committee:** John reported that arrangements are being made for the fall Public Safety Meeting (formerly called the Law Enforcement Meeting) on September 13 or 15 as either a Zoom or in person at the AuSable River Center. Good response so far from Gerrish Township and Roscommon County participants, but not yet from Lyon Township. Both the Lyon Township Supervisor, Julie Tatro, and the Clerk, Doug Schnell, have been invited. Doug participated at the last meeting in May.

John stated that the Riparian Committee will meet on August 25 to provide input on the agenda for the Public Safety Meeting. The committee members have let us know in advance that they would like to discuss:

1. Township control of road end commercial activity,
2. Non-linear dock configurations along Sam-O-Set,
3. Lack of control by DNR at their boat launches.

Last, John added that an additional PA-56 sign was installed in Gerrish Township and two more are awaiting Road Commission installation of signposts. No locations for installation of signs have been selected as of yet by Lyon Township.

**Environmental Committee:** Fred reported the following:

**Dewey Road Culvert Replacement and Big Creek Remediation** - The replacement of the perched culvert on Dewey Road that currently blocks free passage of aquatic species up and down Big Creek is proceeding according to schedule. Roger Saxton of the Roscommon County Road Commission has confirmed that the project will be completed in late August or early September.

Josh Leisen will have the Huron Pines publicity team do photography and write the copy for their newsletter and for local papers when the project is complete. We will review it all before publication.

**Free Lake Shore Living Brochure Available for Distribution** - Fred sent around an email describing an offer from the Midwest Glacial Lakes organization offering useful information for proper lake shore environmental stewardship. Joe Nohner of the Michigan DNR has a warehouse full of copies of this brochure. We can order any amount of them but need to put in our order before September 9, 2021, and Fred recommends that we send a copy to each of our members. Fred will order 520.

**2021 Water Quality Sampling and Analysis of Near Shore Waters, Weeds and Algae** - Septic system effluents flowing into the lake provide ample amounts of nitrogenous and phosphoric nutrients to support plant and algae life in the lake.

Importantly also, increasing lake water temperatures as the summer advances make more rapid biological growth possible. As yet, we have no quantitative data showing plant or algae mass increasing by this natural accelerator. However, we do have anecdotal observations indicating this is indeed occurring.

**Coliform Bacteria** - Fortunately, we do have an EPA certified test, the Beach Plate Count Method that quantitatively shows the level of all coliforms present in lake water. These tests have been done at the EPA certified Raven Laboratories in Roscommon.

In the table below, the averaged coliform bacteria levels measured by Beach Plate Count MPN, (the most probable number of cultured colonies in a 100 ml sample) increased rapidly as the 2021 summer progressed.

Summer 2021	5/12/2021	6/18/2021	7/26/2021
Beach Plate Count, MPN	1.3	489	950

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(average of 13 sites)

Furthermore, the averaged July coliform bacteria levels measured by Beach Plate Count MPN has trended dramatically upward for the past four years, as shown below:

<b>July, Year by Year</b>	<b>7/14/2018</b>	<b>7/17/2019</b>	<b>7/30/2020</b>	<b>7/27/2021</b>
<b>Beach Plate Count, MPN</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>950</b>

(average of 13 sites)

These trends are indeed alarming, as some coliform bacteria can be harmful. However, the root cause of these observed levels is still unclear. Possibilities range from increased human populations on the lake exhibiting unhygienic behaviors, faulty septic system performance in the watershed for assorted reasons, or the growth of naturally occurring coliform bacteria due to the presence of other seasonally increased biologically supporting nutrients. We are working on resolving this situation and efforts are continuing.

**Macro Invertebrate Baseline Survey of Big Creek and The Cut River** - On July 29<sup>th</sup>, Melanie Brown organized an event with Scott Faulkner, Director of the MRWA and Scott Holtgren the MRWA Technical Director to set up a protocol for annual evaluation of the macro invertebrate population inhabiting Big Creek and The Cut River. A 300' section was marked out in each stream as the baseline area for population and species recording each year. The sampling and species census will be done this year on August 29<sup>th</sup> and a report will follow in September.

These data sets provide the best characterization of the environmental condition of these streams. By reporting the data each year, we will be able to see improvements or problems in water quality as they are occurring.

**Determination of Extent and Nature of Micro-plastic Contamination** - Although the project from 2020 was quantitatively compromised due to an unfortunate error in sampled zebra mussel storage conditions, photographs taken by students subsequently in class of a repeat sampling effort qualitatively proved the existence of micro plastic contamination in the lake. Surprisingly, the presence of fibrous plastic material such as might arise from dryer lint exhaust exceeded that of microspheres, which were commonly found in cosmetics before they were declared illegal some years ago. The sample collection will be repeated this summer for subsequent student analysis using the micro photographic accessories that the HLPOA contributed to the Roscommon Area Public High School last year.

**Other Possible Project Activity** - Some additional programs are being added for consideration this summer. The list shown below is possible depending on available funding, volunteer participation and covid-19 restriction limitations.

1. Health Department Survey of Big Creek
2. In-stream habitat improvements for Big Creek
3. Base line study of algal presence in the lake.
4. A "Trash Bash" MRWA sponsored event in August – Fred asked for volunteers.

**PAC:** Greg said there is an opening on the PAC Board and moved to appoint Brad Gibson. The motion was seconded by Fred. Motion passed.

Greg had a conversation with lobbyist John Lindley, about short-term rentals. There are currently bills in each house but both houses are in recess. John Lindley said the bills will likely be modified when the sessions

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reconvene. Greg suggested that we update HLPOA members about the short-term rental situation via an email or in our newsletter. Charlene asked John Ogren to include this topic at the next public safety meeting.

Greg stated that there will be a PAC meeting on Thursday, 8-19, at 4:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

**HLSIO:** Greg stated that the HLSIO board met on August 5<sup>th</sup>, where the main topic was the fundraising dinner that was held on August 12<sup>th</sup>. The event was well received and everyone had a great time. Greg thanked Neal Cooley for catering the dinner and also thanked Jim and Laura Witt for the use of their barn. Dr. Curt Blankespoor of Swimmer's Itch Solutions (SIS) spoke at the dinner about swimmer's itch (SI) and gave the dinner attendees an update. Swimmer's Itch Solutions conducted a bird survey on August 12<sup>th</sup>. For the second year in a row, no Common Merganser broods were found during the entire season.

**Ongoing Business:** Regarding the AMVETS litigation, Charlene stated she had been deposed, but the other deposition was cancelled due to the AMVETS lawyer being sick. Wayne said that he, along with his wife and neighbor, were waiting for deposition dates. A pre-trial is scheduled for September 16th, along with a two-day bench trial October 12th. Wayne added that attorney Bill Carey is looking for riparians, who have knowledge of the marina situation prior to 2012, to testify.

At a meeting on August 3rd, Greg attended a meeting along with representatives of the sewer project with Curt VanderWall and John Lindley. Aspects of the sewer project were discussed, along with what funding may be available from the state. Curt VanderWall will look into state-wide funding options and suggested that we also seek donations from large corporate entities.

Curt DeVoe attended a meeting of the sewer authority last Monday and stated it was the first of several public meetings concerning the sewer project. The next meeting will be August 27th at 6:30 PM at the Roscommon High School.

**New Business:** Charlene stated that our annual meeting went well, and the Board agreed.

Greg discussed the meeting with HLF, where he, Charlene and John attended, along with HLF representatives Vicki Springstead, Bob Blamer, and Jim Kirsch. A discussion was held about the sewer project, which both HLPOA and HLF support. Invasive species was also discussed, where John will work with Jim Kirsch regarding lake studies. John will also speak to the DNR about improving water quality. Also, a HLF representative will contact Fred for open communication of environmental issues. Jack asked that the HLLC be included in these meetings. Greg stated they will have another meeting the first week of September.

Charlene said that Dave Hall needs a count on who can attend the sewer meeting. Greg, Herb, Wayne, Fred, Jack, and John volunteered. The meeting is August 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Gerrish Township Hall.

Fred moved to appoint Curt DeVoe to the environmental committee, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed.

**Adjournment:** Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Greg. The meeting adjourned at 11:17 A.M.

**The next meeting will be September 20, 2021, at 9:00 A.M.**

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