



Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

AuSable River Center, 211 North Main Street
 Mailing Address: P. O. Box 55, Roscommon, MI 48653
 Website: www.hlpoa.org Email: hlpoa0@gmail.com
 Ph.: (989) 275-9181 Fax: (989) 275-9182
 Office Hours: M, W & Th from 9 am - 2:00 pm

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

In this edition:

- President's Message
- Proposed Regulations for PFAS in Drinking Water
- Loons on Higgins Lake
- Swimmers Itch Research
- Hummingbirds
- AIS Data Collection at Boat Access Points
- Flab: Cymbella
- AIS Volunteers Needed
- Protect Higgins Lake
- HLPOA Dues Reminder
- Waterfront Plants to enhance your Shoreline
- HLPOA Fundraiser
- GLUA
- HLPOA Annual Meeting
- HLPOA Board Elections
- Ice Off Official Date
- History of Sharps Corner
- Thank You Donors
- Vintage Maps For Sale
- **Please support Higgins Lake Property Owners Association if you have not already done so, with your paid membership for 2023. Dues must be received by May 1 to be included in the directory.**

President's Message

Summer is on her way, as I can feel it sitting out here in mid-April in 80 degree temps. Soon the activities we enjoy will commence. Docks and boats going in the water are a sure sign of spring and summer pleasures we are fortunate to have at Higgins Lake.

The HLPOA Board has been busy during the fall and winter striving to be representative of the interests of property owners who care about Higgins Lake and want to see it preserved for future generations. Thanks to dedicated members and your support, we are undertaking projects guided by sound, fact-based science.

Working through committees comprised of board and non-board members, we focus on actions which benefit the lake and lakefront owners, including but not limited to:

- *quarterly newsletters, email blasts, and an updated website at hlpoa.org
- *continuing efforts to have Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) clean the lagoon
- *lobbying in Lansing for our voices to be heard
- *bringing awareness of the proposed special assessment district (SAD) for Higgins Lake
- *spring and fall Roscommon County Safety Meetings
- *Roscommon High School student water sampling study
- *studies of Big Creek, Little Creek, and the Cut River
- *representation at township and county meetings
- *analyzing presence of "live forever" chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and hormones in wells
- *and much more-read about it here!

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support. Your membership helps us in these efforts and more.

Charlene Cornell, President HLPOA

Dedicated to Preserving the Quality and Beauty of Higgins Lake.



Proposed New Regulations for PFAS Chemicals in Drinking Water

The Federal EPA has completed environmental studies indicating that no amount of some PFAS chemicals are safe for human consumption in drinking water. In particular, no amount of PFOS (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) above the currently detectable limits of 4 PPT (parts per trillion) is allowable. Both of these chemicals have been shown to be highly carcinogenic at extremely low exposures. None of the many other PFAS chemicals are considered safe, but are not specifically addressed in this proposed regulation.

The new regulation is directed to the discharge of treated water from waste treatment facilities. Technical solutions to removing these chemicals from such concentrated waste treatment streams have been developed, but they would be impractically expensive for treating distributed waste streams, such as in a distributed septic system environment.

PFAS chemicals are present in Higgins Lake. They have been shown to bio accumulate in locally caught rainbow smelt to a level that EGLE has recommended their safe ingestion to only a few servings per month. It is expected that ongoing tests of pike, trout and perch will also lead to recommended limitations for their consumption as well.

This recent proposed EPA regulation and the existing EGLE recommendation have potentially significant impact on some drinking water wells the Higgins Lake Watershed. Because PFAS chemicals are found in Higgins Lake, and because Higgins Lake is fed by ground water from the local watershed, it follows that drinking water wells that access this ground water may also be contaminated by PFAS and other “live forever” chemicals.

Testing for PFAS chemicals is complicated and quite expensive. Only a few laboratories in Michigan are certified to perform these analyses. However, the presence of ANY level of nitrates or nitrites in drinking water, even if below the maximum EGLE allowed safe level, indicates contamination by septic effluents in the ground water. These chemicals are like the “canaries in the coal mine” and warn of impending danger. In cooperation with the Central Michigan District Health Department, we are planning to select a cohort of proven nitrate or nitrite contaminated drinking water wells in the Higgins Lake Watershed for PFAS testing to verify this connection.

We are encouraging any of our members who have older wells, or wells with depths less than 100’, to have their wells tested for nitrate or nitrite contamination. If ANY level of these ions are detected, and if further testing for “live forever” chemicals, like PFAS, pharmaceuticals, or synthetic hormone contamination would be desired, please contact HLPOA (hlpoa0@gmail.com) for further information.

Loons on Higgins Lake (submitted by Higgins Lake Land Conservancy, Bob Frye)

In 2019 the Higgins Lake Land Conservancy (HLLC) was fortunate to purchase property on Treasure Island to be preserved as a loon sanctuary. This success was only possible with the generous donations from our supporters including four major contributors. The property is located on the southwestern quadrant of the island and includes 725 feet of lakefront property. This area of the island is set aside from developed housing and is ideal for loon habitat. The most important guideline for the Loon Preserve is to leave plenty of space so we can allow these birds to be undisturbed while nesting. There is a sign erected on the island that can be viewed from a safe distance marking the habitat.

The HLLC contacted the Michigan State Sea Grant Extension team, who noted that Higgins Lake could provide ideal habitat for the Common Loon. Below is a quote from the Michigan Natural Features Inventory summarizing the ideal habitat:

High quality breeding habitat for Michigan Common Loons has been characterized as an inland lake of adequate size (usually >40 acres) with a stable water level and undeveloped shoreline, small islands, or bog mats for successful nesting (Jung 1987; Robinson et al.1993). Additionally, McIntyre (1988) cites the importance of clear, high-alkaline waters, affording loons sufficient water clarity and high prey densities for foraging.



As discussed in the article, “The ‘Great Northern Diver’- Common Loon Sightings” by Scott Brown, the majority of common loons are found in Canada with loon sightings becoming increasingly rare due to loss of loon habitat as a primary threat.



As indicated in the map included in the article, Higgins Lake is on the border of breeding and migration territory for loons. Brown states that “due to their reliance upon diving to depths of up to fifteen feet to forage for food, loons prefer healthy inland lakes hosting relatively clear water and healthy fisheries.” We have been provided an opportunity to encourage loon presence on the lake with the acquisition of the Higgins Lake Loon Preserve. Over time with the conservation of more land, Higgins Lake may become a sanctuary for these iconic birds.

The HLLC has elected to become members of the Michigan Loon Preservation Association (MLPA) to increase our knowledge and awareness of proper loon habitat and safety. We have been working to track nesting loons in and around Higgins Lake. If you or your family observes any nesting loons please report these findings to our website <http://www.higginslakelandconservancy.com/>. On our homepage of the website there is a tab in the upper left corner with a drop-down menu. One of the options is “Loon Sightings” which brings up a page where individuals can report on the number of loons, nests spotted, and any chicks. We are interested in the graphical location when reporting so we can track trends over time. This information is reported to the MLPA.

Swimmers Itch Research – Want to help?

Last year Higgins Swimmers Itch conducted a Lake Water Exposure Study among people spending time in the water at Higgins Lake. These results allow us to track any Swimmers Itch outbreaks (or lack thereof). This is a critical piece in managing swimmers itch on the lake. If we know where it is, we can identify causes and solutions. **Want to help?** We need more volunteers to share experiences swimming in the lake. If you do or do not contract swimmers itch, the report is important. It's a very short survey and anyone using the lake can participate, Ideally, you fill out a quick online survey after each time you or your friends and family use the water for more than a few minutes. Most of last year's volunteers have agreed to participate again this year (they had so much fun being citizen scientists), but we would like to accumulate as much data as possible. If you want to help, send an email to: higginsswimmersitch@gmail.com

Public Service Announcement on Behalf of Hummingbirds:

This hummingbird is unable to retract her tongue due to fungal spores that have germinated on her tongue or in her gullet caused by folks mixing honey or anything other than plain white sugar with water. She will die because she can no longer feed.

If you have feeders, PLEASE USE ONLY PLAIN WHITE SUGAR in your mixture of 1 part sugar to 4 parts water. No organic or raw or brown sugar, no powdered sugar, no honey, no artificial sugar. Use plain white sugar/water mixture which is most similar to actual flower nectar. And no toxic red color liquids!



Photo Credit: Frank Lingohr
#anialprotectionaffiliates

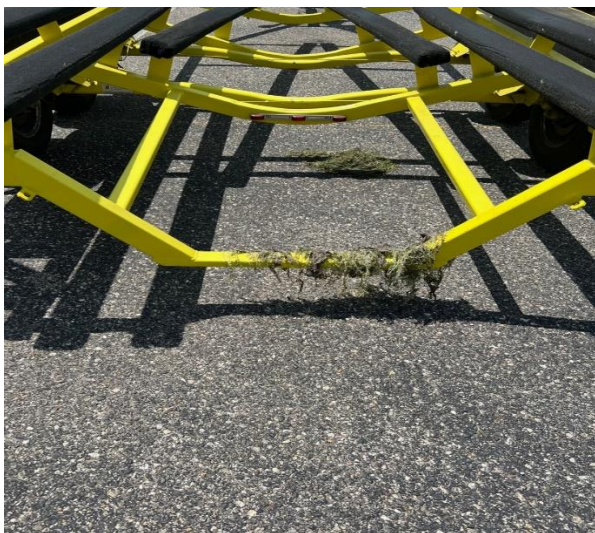
Change the sugar water mixture every couple of days, especially during high temperatures, as it will start to ferment if it sits out for days on end. If you can't or won't do this, please do not put out a feeder at all.

AIS Data Collection Project at DNR Boat Access Sites

HLPOA Board Members together with Higgins Lake Foundation members continue to work with DNR representatives to improve efforts to prevent additional aquatic invasive species from entering Higgins Lake. We currently have four invasives; Eurasian Water Milfoil, Starry Stone Wort and Zebra and Quagga mussels. EGLE maintains a watch list including six other invasives known to exist in Michigan waters.

The South State Park lagoon is our primary area for concern. The lagoon is a manmade addition to the lake dug over 60 years ago shortly after the St. Lawrence Seaway opened and before the spread of invasive species was a major issue in Michigan lakes. While the lagoon provides a sheltered boat access to the lake, it also acts as a spreading point for the four existing invasive species and a potential incubator for the invasives on the EGLE watch list.

Based on preliminary data collected during the summer of 2022, about 10% of boats arriving at the lagoon had weeds hanging from boat or trailer.



However, 100% of the boats are exposed to the four invasives when launched into the lagoon. The lagoon almost always has prop cut weeds floating on the water which can spread invasives to other parts of the lake. From observations in the parking lot, about 25% of the launch trailers carry weeds from the lagoon to the parking lot. Also, about 20% of boats and trailers leaving State Park from the lagoon have hanging weeds which could result in the spread of invasives to other lakes.

The North State Park and West Accesses do not have lagoons and instead launch boats directly into the lake. There are fewer problems with invasives at these locations and our parking lot observations last summer found no hanging weeds on trailers after boat launching. The DNR provides boat washing facilities at or near the launch sites and cleaning stations to remove weeds from trailers leaving the lake. However, relatively few boat operators make use of these facilities and the DNR does not have the manpower to monitor the sites on other than a spot basis.

For the summer ahead we plan a more comprehensive data collection project at all three access sites on five of the busier launch days. We will interview the boat operators while they are waiting in line to launch and try to avoid delaying the launch cycle. We will work in two person teams and hope not to require more than two hours of volunteer time on any of the collection days. Hopefully the data collected will lead to better practices at the boat accesses and help convince the DNR to make positive changes in their operation. We have invited the DNR to participate in the process.

We need some volunteers to help with the data collection effort. Please contact John Ogren at djogren@aol.com or 713-851-4388 if you are willing to help.

FLAB: What is this stuff? Adapted from *Tip of the Mitt, Watershed Council*, Summer 2018

What is that “gooey slime” floating in the lake? This filamentous slime is algae that has grown over winter in the benthos (bottom) of the lake. The algae is not dangerous or harmful to the environment. Codenamed “FLAB” (floating algal benthos), the algae begins growing on the lake bottom, then detaches in the spring from shifting ice and wave action.

Cymbella, is a single-celled algae with cell walls composed of silica and serves as a base of the food chain in water ecosystems. The slime material may appear golden brown or darkish green in coloration. In cold winter months, algae growth is very slow because of low light conditions under the ice and limited availability of phosphorous and nitrogen. To cope with low light and nutrient availability, *Cymbella* has a growth pattern of clumping into filamentous stalks.



The shifting ice melt tears the algae into clumps that float on the water's surface. As the clumps decompose, they may have an unpleasant smell. The clumps of decomposing *Cymbella* are a good food source for macroinvertebrates and, in turn, for fish.

Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz- VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please help greet boaters and share the importance of cleaning boats and gear, at the DNR West boat launch and North State Park, Saturday, July 1, 2023, 9:00-noon. Great opportunity to share message:



Sign up for all or a portion of the morning by calling Kathleen, 989-275-9181. See you there!

What you can do to help protect Higgins Lake:

Please consider volunteering some of your time and/or participating in some of these opportunities this summer. Contact the HLPOA office hlpoa0@gmail.com or 989-275-9181 to volunteer.

- Volunteer to serve on our "Research Team" to help find out what is happening with lake associations around the state
- Help monitor the health of Higgins Lake by assisting in identifying macro-invertebrates in the lake during our annual research projects
- Share your expertise in grant writing or creative ways to obtain funding for lake projects
- Attend lake education seminars and share information with our members

- Assist in clerical help with the HLPOA office when needed (for example: stuffing envelopes)
- Participate in Native Plant-Greenbelt Seminar, Roscommon Area District Library, May 31, 2023, 4:00 pm
- Drop off your household hazardous waste. Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Roscommon County Road Commission, 820 East West Branch Road, Prudenville, MI Saturday, June 3, 2023, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Volunteer to be part of the HLPOA Information Table at Higgins Lake Foundation's Healthy Higgins Fare, Ralph A. MacMullen (RAM) Conference Center, North Higgins Lake State Park, June 10, 2023, 9:00 am
- Volunteer for Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz, Saturday, July 1, 2023, 9:00 am – noon
- Attend Sips, Chips, and Dips (HLPOA Fundraiser) Thursday, July 6, 2023, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm (\$50.00 per person)
- Protect Higgins Lake through good shoreland management practices by becoming a Michigan Shoreland Steward.

To learn more, visit <http://www.mishorelandstewards.org>

HLPOA Dues Reminder

Thank you to the many members who have already renewed their membership for 2023. The annual membership of \$115.00 is due each year by January 31st. If you haven't paid your 2023 dues take a minute and mail a check to the office. It is the income from the dues that funds the important work that HLPOA does for the lake including representing the interests of riparians on Higgins Lake. In addition to the dues, many of you have generously made donations to support specific areas of interest which include, legal, environmental or general fund. You may continue to support financially these areas throughout the year.

To be included in the 2023 HLPOA Membership Directory, your dues need to be received by May 1st.

To renew your membership simply mail your check to the HLPOA office at:
HLPOA
P.O. Box 55
Roscommon, MI 48653

Use Waterfront Plants to Enhance Your Shoreline

Plants that grow in, along, and just outside water play an important role in protecting water quality. Plant native plants to hold soil in place. They will absorb and lessen energy from waves. Planting and maintaining a lawn along water's edge does not provide a deep and dense root system to protect against erosion. Adding a native tree, flowering shrub, or a handful of wildflowers can make a difference. For information on smart gardening along shorelines visit www.migarden.msu.edu

HLPOA-Summer Fundraiser

For the Love of the Lake

Join Us for

Sips, Chips and Dips

Save the Date, Thursday, July 6, 2023

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

\$50 per person – beach attire

At: Cornell Beaches

1531-1549 E Higgins Lake Dr.

Come by sea as parking is limited

Electronic invitation to follow

Save the Date: Higgins Lake Property Owners Annual Meeting, July 22, 2023

This year's HLPOA Annual Meeting will be held in person on July 22, 2023, 8:45 am at the Roscommon High School, Auditorium, 10600 Oakwood Drive, Roscommon, Michigan.

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, 2023. 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.

Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority (GLUA)

The GLUA has meetings scheduled for the following dates:

- May 3, 2023
- June 12, 2023
- July 10, 2023

All meetings will be held at the Gerrish Township Hall, 2997 East Higgins Lake Drive, Roscommon, Michigan at 7:00 pm.

“Official” Ice is off the Lake

Herb Weatherly, HLPOA Board Member, announced April 15, 2023 “It's Thawed Day”.

Early history of “Sharp's Corners”

In 1898 young Daniel Tyler Sharpe (my great-grandfather) moved from his lavish boyhood manor home in Flint to a barren and logging era-stripped 80-acre parcel of land granted to him by lumber-baron Henry Stephans & Co. to homestead in Higgins Lake. At the time while stripped to a mere field of pine stumps, native Indians of the area still used the field of this barren property (the original “Mackinaw” native Indian trail bisects the land) as a summer encampment for fishing and hunting near the lake- sharing the land with them as he attempted to farm it with moderate success. Thanks to the support of earlier neighboring homesteading families nearby like the Burleson's (Burleson Orchard & Farm) & Sergeant's (Sergeant's Dairy Farm – now Sergeant's Septic & Excavating), the “Dan Sharp Farm” became a landmark staple of the area community... though less of an actual farm as Daniel T. Sharp found more success as an area carpenter than farming the sandy soil. The “Dan Sharp Farm” also hosted the area post office for many years for the early Higgins Lake / Markey area as well as a trading post of sorts for the area's goods.



**Dan Sharp Farm circa 1910. Mostly post logging-era barren land littered with pine stumps. This view is looking west across the sandy wagon road that is Markey Rd. For reference, the barn in this photo is roughly where the new Dollar General is located today.*

The Sharp family lakeshore parcel property (the north 40 acres of the 80-acre homestead) was developed by Dan T. Sharp as “Sylvan Beach” where a summer lake house (which still exists but moved from its original location along the beach to the west) was constructed along with several smaller vacation rental cabins. Due in part to the scarcity of the local economy at the time, this portion of the original homestead parcel was exchanged for taxes to the State of Michigan in 1926 to become the seed property of the (South) Higgins Lake State Park, which was opened in 1927.



**Sharp's "Sylvan Beach" lake house cottage circa 1920. Its original location is roughly where campsite #143 in the S. Higgins Lake State Park is today. It was moved outside of the park to the west- just on the other side of the park's fence of campsite #470 location today. It has been recently renovated & continues to serve as a historical vacation rental retaining much of its original appearance as it did in 1920.*

“Dad Sharp’s Place”

In 1923 Dan Sharp’s Farm became more of an area landmark trading post of sorts than an actual farm. “Dad Sharp’s Place” began as a small local produce stand, roadside cookshack, tiny grocery store & early gas station for White Star gasoline (later, Gulf gasoline). Continuing in the construction trades, Dan Sharp also was heavily involved in building many of Higgins Lake’s early cottages, road construction, as well as helping build the (South) Higgins Lake Park Store with the CCC in 1935 and later the “Ralph A. McMullen” enter lodge (North State Park) projects.

*To read this article, please go to our website
<http://hlpoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Sharp-Family-History.pdf>



*Dad Sharp's Place circa 1925.

Thank you to our donors:

Special Thank You: Sharon Caldwell

General Fund: Irene Bacsanyi, Elizabeth Camp & Pat Weyburne, Barbara Cantley, Alvan Carr, Club Michihiggi, Dan & Cindy Ferwerda, Jim & Monica Goble, Terrilee Henne, Gerald Jusco, Todd & Stacie Kwaiser, Gail Lynch & Catherine Markland, Mark & Gail O'Brien, Sandra Olson, Scot & Kathy Richards, Ted & Julia Townsend Dunn, Robert & Dianne Zuzula

Environment Fund: Peter Anderson, William & Katherine Beuerle, Barbara Cantley, Neal Cooley, John & Chris Ogren, Sandra Olson, Terry Rye, Kelley & Jen Snook, Ted & Julia Townsend Dunn

Legal Fund: Larry & Judy Beckert, Barbara Cantley, Randon & Patricia Haight, Sandra Olson, B. Calvin Philips, Paul & Eve Ryznar, Kelley & Jen Snook, Ted & Julia Townsend Dunn, Tom & Margaret Wright

Vintage Maps

Vintage Higgins Lake Maps available for purchase.

Exclusive to Higgins Lake Property Owners Association members

Order your 1936-1937 Map of Higgins Lake. (Map only, mat and frame not included).

Please submit \$50.00 per map to further support our organization and receive your 14" x 11" print suitable for framing.

Mail your check payable to HLPOA to P. O. Box 55, Roscommon, MI 48653. Indicate Number of Maps and where to send them.

2022-2023 HLPOA Board: President - Charlene Cornell, Vice President - Greg Semack, Secretary - Herb Weatherly, Treasurer - Bruce Carleton. Directors: Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Becky Gibson, Curt DeVoe, Bob McKellar, John Ogren and Fred Swinehart. Administrative Assistant - Kathleen Barger.