



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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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
May 15, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:00 A.M.

Board Members Present: Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Bruce Carleton, Herb Weatherly, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, were present. Jack Cornell was absent.

Agenda: No changes.

President's Comments: Charlene thanked everyone for all of their help and efforts with the SAD (Special Assessment District), including research, attendance at meetings, and opposition letters.

Minutes: The April 17, 2023, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report: The April 30, 2023, financials were presented. There were no questions. As proposed at our last meeting, Bruce and Herb met at our bank recently, to close the existing savings account and transfer the money to higher yielding accounts. The \$50,521 existing savings account balance, together with a \$15,000 transfer from our General Account, was used to fund a new CD (\$30,000) and Money Market Account (\$35,521). Assuming similar balances are maintained, and rates remain unchanged, the HLPOA should now earn over \$2,500.00 annually in interest.

Membership & Communication: Wayne said we have 456 members, with 5 joining recently due to our 2nd prospects mailing. A 3rd mailing was discussed due to SAD. Wayne also thanked Charlene & Ric for their tremendous amount of work in completing the 2023-member directory. Thank you, Charlene and Ric! Becky shared that we have received a great deal of response from our members, as a result of our informative email blasts. Thank you, Becky, for the great job! Also, a discussion was held about adding a link on our website for new member information.

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

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Roscommon County Safety Meeting with local law enforcement will be a Zoom meeting on May 23 with a good commitment of participants from the county and both townships.

A Zoom meeting to finalize the RLS study is scheduled for May 24. Good progress has been made on clarifications and the report should be ready for posting on our web site soon.

Plans for data collection on boat launches at the three DNR access sites are progressing and will start over Memorial Day weekend. Signs and forms have been finalized and two people have volunteered from the Riparian Committee. A few more volunteers are needed.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

Macro invertebrate Surveys: Melanie Brown and her committee of volunteers will be doing the Spring Macro Invertebrate survey in Big Creek May 18th and the Cut River May 19th. Teams will meet at 10:00. More help is always welcome! In the water participants collect samples, runners take them to the picker tables where the critters are sorted and preserved.

Student Testing of Near Shore Waters: The 2023 program for the lake has begun. As in previous years, financial support from the Higgins Lake Foundation, Roscommon Rotary, Raven Laboratory and HLPOA member John Ogren have been generously provided. The first cycle of testing is planned to occur in late May or early June, having been somewhat delayed by the late arrival of spring.

Brook Trout Habitat Improvement: Another environmental program featuring student involvement is being launched this year in cooperation with the Big Creek Lane Association. In 2019, DNR Fisheries scientist Mark Tonello completed an electro fishing survey of Big Creek. The final report was published in March 2020. Quoting from his recommendations: "Big Creek hosts a robust, self-sustaining population of brook trout. Much of the stream is wide and shallow, with very little depth (which is necessary to hold larger trout). The in-stream habitat in Big Creek could be improved with a minimum of effort using hand-placed wood to narrow and deepen the stream channel, as well as providing overhead cover, which is also preferred by larger trout."

A design for the placement of up to 17 "single vane" wood flow diverting structures was made, and a permit was issued for this work by EGLE (Department of Environment, Great lakes, and Energy) in April of 2022. It is valid until April of 2027. In the fall of 2022, several test structures were installed to prove their design relative to stream reconfiguration and to demonstrate their survivability during high water events in the spring. A good design has evolved and appears suitable for supervised student construction.

A proposal will be discussed at the Big Creek Lane Association's annual meeting Memorial Day weekend. If they are comfortable with the plan, then organizing a few leadership teams, recruiting the hands-on participants, gathering construction materials, and going to work would be the business of a few outings this summer. Hopefully the costs will be minimal, and most materials required will be donated.

Testing of Drinking Water Wells: We are still 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 is detected, and if further testing for "live forever" chemicals, like PFAS (perfluoroalkyl substances), pharmaceuticals, or synthetic hormone contamination would be desired, please contact HLPOA for further information.

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Regarding the project to monitor water flow rates in the Cut River, Fred said that Jack Cornell now has the turbine flow meter device. Fred will contact Nicholas Theisen of Huron Pines, who will oversee and assist with water depths and flow measurements. A volunteer team will be organized.

A motion was made by Fred to re-instate Bob McKellar on the environmental committee. The motion was seconded by Greg. Motion passed.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

Much of the activity has centered around the proposed SAD for Higgins Lake. Many people again spoke in opposition to the project at the two Roscommon Commissioner meetings since our last meeting. Charlene hand delivered another request for the Commissioners to meet with the HLPOA and HLLC.

In other county related business, The CHLLL Lake level lawsuit is to begin on July 20th. At their last meeting, the county commissioners voted to keep moving forward with the Higgins Lake SAD. A motion to put everything on hold until the CHLLL lawsuit is settled was voted down 3-2.

This Wednesday, May 17th at 7 PM, Lyon Township will host an informational meeting about the Higgins Lake SAD. This Friday, May 17th Michelle Hoitenga will speak to residents at 11 AM at the Markey Township Hall.

HLSIO: Greg reported the following:

HLSIO held a meeting on May 3rd. We approved the budget for the 2023 season. We will be sponsoring a research project about the gestation period of the parasites in the ducks, and we will continue with our data collection of where and when SI might be occurring. Duncan Lawrence is heading the water study project again this year and we would like to have more volunteers in order to increase the data set. We will be looking for ways to advertise to find more participants and much want to send an email out in the next month to help recruit. In addition to our work, Crystal Lake will be studying snail infection rates this summer in order to judge what happened when they weren't allowed to relocate Birds last summer.

We already have completed the Canada geese control program for this season. There will likely yet be some geese on the lake this summer. The period for control has now ended. But the geese that are gone will be a significant decrease in the summer population.

Thanks to John Ogren for again handling the entire project.

We cannot relocate common merganser ducks this season as the DNR is once again suspending our relocation program due to the Avian Flu.

We will be making website updates in May so that they will be completed before the end of the month. Thanks to Melanie Brown for managing this project.

We will be seeking to have a fundraising dinner again this summer on August 17th and Mike Purkey and Phil Czech will be working on that. More information will be forthcoming when we have identified the details.

Melanie Brown and Phil Czech will shortly be putting the final touches on allowing PayPal donations for HLSIO. We expect this to be concluded by the end of May.

Ongoing Business:

Sewer Project: Charlene reported that the grassroots volunteer group continues efforts to collect supportive petitions for the sewer project, in an effort to surpass the 50+% needed.

Charlene attended a Tip of the Mitt webinar on septic systems. It was hosted by Jennifer McKay, who has been hired by Higgins Lake Land Conservancy to study materials on the proposed sewer system. Ms. McKay opposes sewers, as they may bring development to the area. Becky added that Jim Barnwell is the new GLUA (Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority) chair, as Dave Udy stepped down. Bill Lamb also rejoined. GLUA.

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Camp Grayling: Becky spoke of the recent Camp Grayling expansion decision by the DNR, where the proposed land is illegible for lease; however, limited land use permits are allowed for up to 52,000 acres of eligible land for short-term training activities. Becky read the following memorandum from Michigan.gov.

Michigan.gov response to Camp Grayling expansion:

Proposal and decision: An initial review of the DMVA's request found that most of the proposed lands were ineligible for such a lease because they are within buffer zones around bodies of water or were purchased with funds that prohibit activities planned by the National Guard.

The remaining land, approximately 53,000 acres, could be available to the DMVA for short-term, low impact training activities.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement between the DNR and the DMVA, the DMVA may apply for limited land use permits to conduct exercises on up to 52,000 acres of eligible land.

Key point in the Memorandum of Understanding:

- No lease approved; the DMVA may annually apply for land use permits
- DMVA training could occur on up to 52,000 acres of state managed forest land
- Recreational access to remain at all times
- The size of buffer zones around inland lakes and designated trout streams-where no military activity could take place- was doubled by DNR from 1,500 feet in the initial proposal to 3,000 feet in the Memorandum of Understanding
- No live fire or use of tanks on these lands; no permanent fencing or structures

Annual Meeting: Charlene asked who would need informational tables at the annual meeting and to let her know soon.

Fundraiser: Regarding the *Sips, Chips & Dips* fundraiser on July 6th, Charlene asked for volunteers. Electronic invitations will be sent to members.

Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

The next meeting will be June 19, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

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