



Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

AuSable River Center, 211 North Main Street
Mailing Address: PO Box 55, Roscommon, MI 48653
Website: www.hlpoa.org Email: hlpoa0@gmail.com
989-275-9181

Office Hours: M, W & Th from 9 am – 2 pm

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



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"Ice Out" 2024

Herb Weatherly, HLPOA Board Member, declared March 13, 2024 "Ice Out" (earliest recorded by local volunteer "experts".) Total snow 18.75".

Gerrish-Lyon Utility Authority (GLUA)

For the latest information and updates regarding the sewer project in Gerrish and Lyon Township, go to: glua.org

President's Message

Please join us!



Ken Dennings

It is with deep regret we share the sad news of the passing of Kenneth Dennings. Ken was past president of Higgins Lake Property Owners Association. Known as "Mr. Higgins", he was most instrumental in starting the Swimmer's Itch Program. He worked diligently with others to implement environmentally sound methods to significantly reduce Swimmer's Itch at Higgins Lake. Donations in Ken's honor can be made to Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization (HLSIO) hlsio.org.

Call for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Inspection Help

The Riparian Committee plans to continue work this year with Higgins Lake Foundation (HLF) on boat and trailer inspections at the DNR Accesses for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Our work last year indicated that about 85% of the risk of new AIS entering Higgins Lake is at the South State Park; largely because of the continued use of the lagoon as the access. Boats launched at the lagoon are also, by far, the largest spreaders of existing AIS around the lake.

In addition to survey work of arriving boats at the Department of Natural (DNR) accesses, we will continue checking parked boat trailers for weeds at the DNR accesses and at the other four most active accesses; Kelly Beach, Maplehurst Drive, Townline Road and the Gerrish Marina. Based on the 2023 surveys, these non-DNR accesses create only a minor risk for new AIS and for spreading of existing AIS.

To supplement this inspection project, HLF has arranged for Dr. Luttenton and his staff to do rake toss inspections for AIS at all seven accesses on a monthly basis this summer. We expect this information to help keep the focus on the highest risk areas around the lake.

Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please help greet boaters and share the importance of cleaning boats and gear, at the North State Park and the DNR West boat launch, Saturday, June 22, 2024.



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

Save the Date

- June 3 – **Aquatic Invasive Species, Help Stop the Spread**
10:00 am – 11:00 am, RAM Conference Center

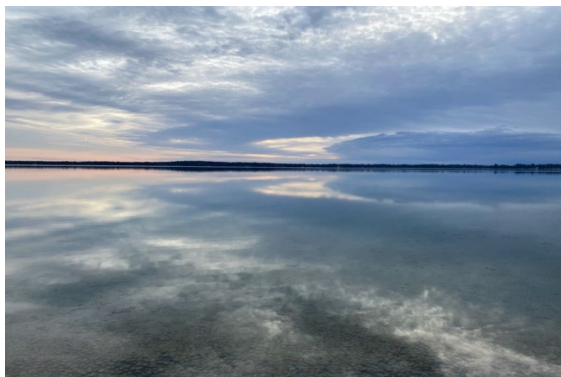
RSVP Higgins Lake Foundation
989-275-9183
- June 22 – **Landing Blitz**
9:00 am – 12:00 pm, North State Park and DNR West Launch
- July 2 – **Greenbelt Shoreline Buffer and Native Plant Sale**
10:00 am – 11:00 am, RAM Conference Center

RSPVP – Higgins Lake Foundation
989-275-9183
- July 5 – **Chips, Sips, & Dips**
5:00 – 7:00 pm, The Jack Cornell Beach
Tickets purchased through email coming soon
- July 13 – **Higgins Lake Property Owners Association Annual Meeting**
8:00 am registration/meeting
8:45 am, Roscommon High School Auditorium, 10600 Oakwood Drive, Roscommon
- July 13 – **Roscommon Art Festival**
9:00 am, Downtown Roscommon
- August 3 – **Higgins Lake Foundation, Higgins Lake Annual Awareness Fundraiser**
4:00 pm, RAM Conference Center
- August 15 – **Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization Fundraiser**
Watch for details

Student Higgins Lake Water Sampling and Analysis Program

This very popular program will begin its seventh year on May 22, 2024. Nine students from the Roscommon Area Public High School's Chemistry and Biology classes will be participating. Each student receives a certification of achievement from the American Chemical Society and a neat "Life is All About Testing the Waters" tee shirt for participating. This project is financially supported by the Higgins Lake Foundation, The Roscommon County Community Foundation, the Roscommon Rotary Club, the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association, Raven Laboratory and Roscommon High Graduate, John Ogren

Last year's results are displayed on the hlpoa.org website: <https://hlpoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Higgins-Lake-report-September-2023-1.pdf>



Latest News from Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization

Higgins Lake Swimmer's Itch Organization (HLSIO) has much to report since our last newsletter. The biggest news is that our Common Merganser trap and relocation program has been reinstated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) after a two-year absence. We expect that there will be Merganser broods to relocate and are already making plans to do so. HLSIO will once again be working with Drs. Curt Blankespoor and Randy DeJong of Swimmer's Itch Solutions during the

2024 summer season. In addition to our relocation program for Merganser ducks, HLSIO will be working to control the Canada goose population of Higgins Lake again. Permits for both Canada goose reduction and merganser relocation have been obtained and all are ready to go.

HLSIO has conducted a Water Exposure Study for the past two years that monitors actual prevalence of Swimmer's Itch (SI) among those using the lake. This study offers an easy way to measure whether or not Swimmer's Itch was contracted based on actual users of the lake and tracks changes over time. Last year volunteers provided 200+ reports of swimming/recreation instances at nearly 20 locations across the lake. Once again, we need help as we continue to measure the impact of SI. To participate, volunteers fill out a simple survey online after they use the water, it only takes a couple minutes. You can sign up for this year's study at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfhlvOjb_34nUrBZ4T59ltYiAzKfzMp3_LeDI74AhO49quSPg/viewform?usp=sharing

During the upcoming summer season, HLSIO will be continuing to expand our knowledge of the gestation period of the parasite within the ducks. This summer we will study more closely the time required for the SI parasite to become viable. This information is extremely valuable in determining the timing necessary for successful relocation.

A peer reviewed paper was published earlier this year by Swimmer's Itch Solutions that chronicles the success story of trapping and relocating Common Merganser ducks for the purpose of reducing Swimmer's Itch on inland lakes. Information on this report and other pertinent Swimmer's Itch issues can be found at the HLSIO website: hlsio.org. You are encouraged to review our website which has recently been updated to include the latest news and details about how HLSIO is working on behalf of the Higgins Lake community and what you can do to help.

HLPOA Dues Reminder

Thank you to the many members who have already renewed their membership for 2024. The annual membership of \$115.00 is due each year by January 31st. If you haven't paid your 2024 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 our general fund. Please note, you may continue to support these areas financially throughout the year.

To renew your membership, mail your check to:
HLPOA, PO Box 55, Roscommon, MI 48653.

EPA Requires Testing of Drinking Water for PFAS

In a new national ruling, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard to protect communities from exposure to harmful per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as 'forever chemicals.' Exposure to PFAS has been linked to deadly cancers, impacts to the liver and heart, and immune and developmental damage to infants and children. This final rule represents the most significant step to protect public health under [EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#). The final rule will reduce PFAS exposure for approximately 100 million people, prevent thousands of deaths, and reduce tens of thousands of serious illnesses.

Per- and poly- fluoralkyls are present in Higgins Lake. They are found at dangerous levels in the fish that live in the lake, as evidenced by Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). EGLE's issuance of limitations on consuming rainbow smelt is an example. An EGLE PFAS sampling program has

determined that there is no point source for these pollutants, thus they arrive in the ground water that flows into the lake from the watershed. This is discussed on the hlpoa.org website referenced below:

<https://hlpoa.org/higgins-lake/environmental-lake-level/water-quality/>

The proposed STEP Sewer System will prevent these PFAS compounds from entering the lake through the ground water. The sewer system will concentrate PFAS chemicals in one place at the waste water treatment plant, where they can be economically treated and removed from plant's discharge stream. In this way, PFAS will eventually disappear from Higgins Lake, and eventually remove Higgins Lake as a PFAS source for the entire Muskegon River Watershed.

Until then, our strong recommendation continues that everyone around the lake should have their drinking water tested for the presence of nitrates or nitrites. The presence of ANY level of these chemicals, indicates that the aquifer from which the drinking water has been drawn is being contaminated from septic system effluents.

Drinking water so contaminated will also contain PFAS and other human sourced hazards like pharmaceuticals, viruses, and other chemicals too. So, until the sewer is completed, in these contaminated drinking water situations, bottled water is highly recommended be used for all purposes involving human ingestion.

Summer Part-time workers needed

Short-term part-time summer workers are needed at Higgins Lake South State Park and RAM Center. For more information go to:

<http://michigan.gov/dnr/about/careers/park-workers>

Marketable Record Title Act

At the April 2024 HLPOA Board meeting, Attorney Bill Carey addressed recent amendments to the MRTA (Marketable Record Title Act). The amendments deal with whether deed restrictions may become unenforceable if the restrictions are not rerecorded at least every 40 years. At this time, while the amendments have been adopted into law, the deadline for rerecording has been modified twice. There is currently a deadline for rerecording of September 29, 2025, for anyone intending to file a Notice of Claim under the MRTA. Some Higgins Lake associations and subdivisions may especially be impacted by MRTA changes. For additional details go to:

<http://hlpoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Marketable-Record-Title-Act-newsletter.pdf>

HLPOA Dues for 2025

HLPOA Dues for 2025 will be \$125.00. Please note, dues for 2025 are due on January 31, 2025

Board of Directors Elections

Elections of Directors for the HLPOA Board are held during each Annual Meeting of 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. 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.

2023-2024 HLPOA Board

President – Charlene Cornell, Vice President – Greg Semack, Secretary – Herb Weatherly, Treasurer – Bruce Carleton

Directors: Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, and Fred Swinehart

Administrative Assistant – Kathleen Barger

Thank you to our donors

General Fund: Irene Bacsanyi, William & Katherine Beuerle, Vernon & Karen Boyajian, Carole L. Briggs, David & Lisa Brown, Elizabeth Camp & Pat Weyburne, Barbara Cantley, Paul & Kate Duhaime, Mike & Liz Kociba, Ron & Linda Koelsch, Nancy Albosta Perry, Connie Price, Gary & Paula Pritchard, Scot & Kathy Richards, Craig & Carol Sable, Ron & Michelle Spisak, Pat & Vicki Springstead, Gary Wales, Brian & Jennifer Walter

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In Memory of Boyd and Pat Gilchrist: Diane Deforest, Scott & Debbie Filer and Michael Smith

In Memory of Violet Rockwell: Guy & Joyce Anselmo Family, Vicki Hansen, Derek & Carolyn Kerr, Kenneth & Glenna Webster, Muzza Eaton, Jim & Lonna Petrie, Jason & Suzanne Allen, Thomas & Katherine Gunn, William Gorsuch & Linda Wagner, Tom & Lisa Isler, James & Donna Rocoff, Ryan & Nicole Pichla and Dominos Farms Family Medicine