



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

Board Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2025

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:05 A.M.

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

Agenda: No changes.

President's Comments: Charlene thanked Becky and member Karen Cornell for their help with finalizing the Winter Newsletter! Charlene then reminded everyone that Jim Ostling will be joining our meeting at 9:30 to discuss the Health of Higgins Lake.

December Minutes: The December 16, 2024, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: Herb stated that we received our office lease agreement for 2025, where our rent remains at \$250.00/month. Herb will sign it and deliver it to the Roscommon Area Recreation Authority.

Treasurer's Report: The HLPOA December 31, 2024, fiscal direct "preliminary" financials were presented and will be sent to our CPA to start our year-end statement. Bruce stated that these preliminary financials will be posted on our website to be replaced by the CPA prepared statements when completed and available. Bruce added that the most recent Statement of Financial Position shows net assets of \$169,000, vs \$30,000 in 2018, demonstrating a significant increase in financial strength over that time attributed to the sound management practices of the HLPOA Board. Bruce then presented and reviewed the 2025 final budget draft. After discussion, Fred moved to approve the 2025 budget, seconded by John. Motion passed.

Membership & Communication: Wayne explained how the forms for directory advertisers were sent earlier for the 2025 Member Directory, which resulted in 21 advertisers participating already!

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

90 Years dedicated to preserving the quality and beauty of Higgins Lake

Wayne then stated that we currently have 272 members. A committee, consisting of Wayne, Becky, Charlene and Patty, met last week to discuss how to increase membership, targeting those who have not renewed over the past 2-3 years, new property owners not in our database, along with those who have not yet renewed in 2025. These groups will be contacted via a letter and/or postcard.

Other areas discussed were online payment methods, setting up a QR code linked to our website, installation of the Mail Chimp software, and help from members to “get younger” and “be current” with our needs. Patty added that we could email our members for their help and identify specific areas where help is needed. Charlene asked that suggestions be sent to her by Friday, as to what areas we could ask for assistance from our members.

Riparian Committee: John said there was nothing new to report at this time.

Speaker Jim Ostling: Greg introduced Jim Ostling, Gerrish Township Trustee, and thanked him for his time to address the HLPOA Board about the HOHL (Health of Higgins Lake).

Jim thanked the HLPOA for this opportunity to talk with us, adding he appreciates all the work done by the HLPOA. Jim then gave an overview of the power point presentation that he presented to the Gerrish Township Board at their work session in December, stating that the future of Higgins Lake is of the utmost importance. Jim explained that the HOHL will have a steering committee consisting of 5 people, along with several sub-committees. Immediate areas to be addressed are the septic ordinance, road-end erosion, and a fertilizer ordinance. Several topics were discussed, among them being the mission statement, data analysis, the sewer system, and developing a master plan. Jim then answered questions from our Board members. Jim was complimented on his presentation and was thanked by all.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

GIS Layered Mapping of Septic Systems and Wells – Update

The project to completely map all available drinking wells and septic system locations onto a GIS (Geographic Information System) map of all properties in Gerrish and Lyon Townships is proceeding well. This project is part of the plan by Central Michigan Division of the Health Department (CMDHD) to map all 48 townships in the six counties in their jurisdiction. The information to be mapped derives from publicly available septic system installation and well drilling permits issued by CMDHD. There are approximately 6,000 parcels to be scanned and then placed onto the base map in their proper location.

Technical leadership and application training will be provided by Taylor Irwin, located in the CMDHD offices in Mount Pleasant. The work of placing these permit records on the base GIS layer will be done by a team of local HLPOA volunteers. Their mapping efforts should be completed within about six months. This map should then be available for public view soon after.

The actual manner of presentation and display is yet to be decided, but a good example of a similar project for the Cedar River Watershed primarily in Gladwin County can be seen in this reference:

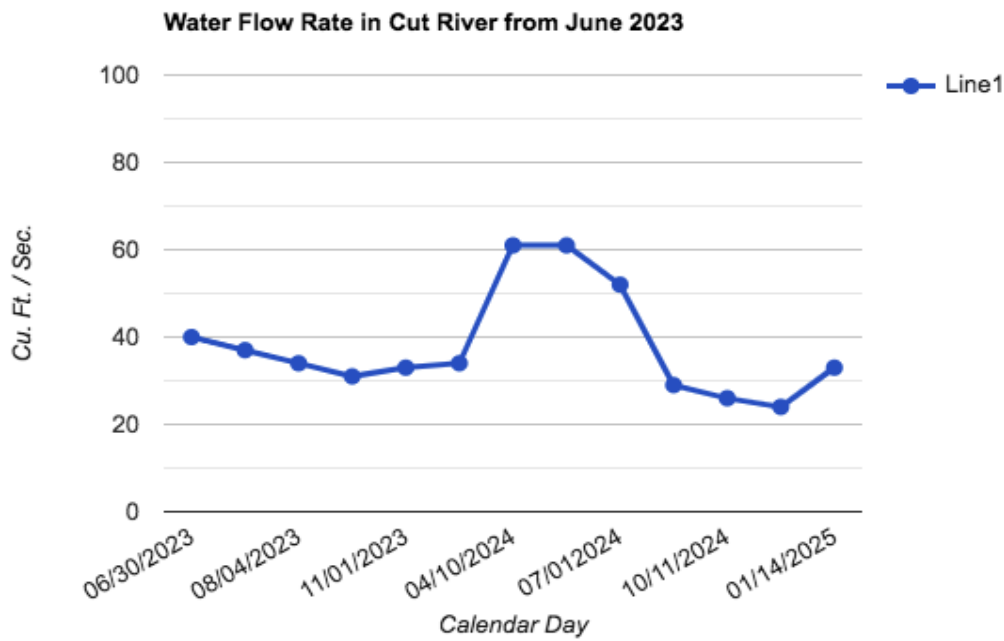
<https://www.cmdhd.org/cedarriverwatershed>

Winter is the Time to Look for Woolly Adelgid in Hemlock Trees!

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDNR/bulletins/3c6f5cb>

Water Flow Rate in the Cut River – Update

Monthly estimates of the flow rate in the Cut River 100’ below the County 100 culverts continues. An updated presentation is now on our website under the Lake Level History/ Cut River Flow Rate — Data Gathering Tab: <https://hlpoa.org/life-is-testing-the-waters/>



Becky shared that she participated in the Minnesota seminar on SSW (Starry Stonewort), where various methods were used to remove this invasive species. Becky will send the seminar link to Board members.

HLSIO: Greg reported the following:

HLSIO next meeting is 1-22-25, so little has changed since the December update.

We will be finalizing our plans for 2025 over the next couple of months. We plan to continue with our work with SIS (Swimmer's Itch Solutions) on merganser relocation, water exposure study and snail infection study. For the Water Exposure Study, we will be looking to increase our participants through online, as well as a hard copy tracking sheet for those less technically inclined (or motivated). As previously mentioned, we don't expect to be able to do Canada Goose relocation due to DNR taking over the process, however, we will be monitoring our options going forward. Additionally, we will be brainstorming other ideas to broaden our depth of knowledge of Swimmer's Itch and coordination with other local affected lakes over the next couple months. Future marketing efforts will include continued updating of our website (HLSIO.org) and coordination with the Houghton Lake Resorter to increase awareness of our efforts. You can also expect our Annual Fundraising Dinner in August to continue, as the "new" owners of Fred's Restaurant has committed to continuing their support.

A potential wild card is the increased discussion of Avian Flu in certain areas, as previously this limited our ability to continue with our merganser relocation efforts. We will monitor this going forward but remain optimistic that we will be able to continue our relocation efforts.

Duncan Lawrence and Mike Purkey will be presenting a brief overview of Swimmers Itch and the efforts of HLSIO at the February 6, 2025, Roscommon Rotary meeting.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

- Both Lyon and Gerrish have rescinded the previously established Special Assessment Districts (SAD) for GLUA
- Nothing new regarding lawsuits. No date yet for SAD appeal, as yet no date scheduled for either it or the suit challenging PA 112. There will be some new information shortly for the federal case challenging PA 112. The result of the CHLLL lake level case requires some modification of the current dam but as yet the county has not gotten permitting approved by EAGL. HLLC has loaned the county \$8000 in order to have Prein and Newhof do engineering work necessary to satisfy their EGLE request in the permit process. The county intends to pay this back and put this debt in the SAD if the SAD goes forward.
- In county news, Kim Morley has been installed as new district 2 commissioner.
- Gerrish Township is initiating a new project labeled Health of Higgins Lake. Jim Ostling is leading this effort which is centered around the guiding principle that something must be done to protect the health of the lake and that doing nothing is not an option. Under this project Gerrish Township will look at many options that result from their own research.
- New Lyon Township Board Members attended the Gerrish Meeting of 1-12-25. Some highlights were Tim Monet saying that he is disappointed that the townships have not sued the State for its failure to do more to protect Higgins Lake in the past. Lyon Township Supervisor Paul Bertrand indicated that he did not believe results from many previous lake quality studies and that Lyon Township would be focusing on algae in Higgins Lake and working with a group of lakes to the north. Clam, Bellaire and Torch. They believe algae growth is prominent in most northern MI lakes and that it has nothing to do with poor septic systems.

- HLPAC Board member Marty Barta reported that Lyon intends to create ordinances about fertilizer restriction, adding green belts and other things for the benefit of the health of Higgins Lake, which they feel is more important than pursuing the GLUA sewer. They intend to invite the HLF and the HLPOA to join them in their pursuit of these things which they will work on in the future. Supervisor Bertrand believes that the lake front properties are the most at fault in Septic leakage as he says that of the 11 properties that have failed the septic examination in Lyon Township, 9 were lakefront homes.
- Rodney Most will be a new member of the Gerrish Township Police Department
- The petition challenge in the Tax Tribunal case has been dismissed as being moot now that the Lyon Township GLUA SAD has been rescinded.

GLUA Report: Greg reported the following:

GLUA met on 1-9-25. The new Lyon board members were there. The new members have been asked to review the qualifications of the three companies that were sought to help organize GLUA. They said they understand everything but would not commit to a work session to better coordinate current objectives, including choosing a company to help with GLUA organization. There is also some question among current Gerrish Township representatives of the GLUA board as to how to proceed in this regard.

Ongoing Business: Charlene reminded everyone to send in raffle ticket sales.

Adjournment: Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Becky. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:49 A.M.

The next meeting will be February 17, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.