



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

Board Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2025

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:04 A.M.

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

Agenda: No changes.

President's Comments: Charlene wished everyone a happy Presidents' Day!

January Minutes: The January 20, 2025, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report: The January 31, 2025, financials were presented and there were no questions. Bruce noted that on the Statement of Income, some line items have been consolidated. Regarding our annual fiscal statement, which is a compilation, Bruce noted there has been a change with our CPA firm, from Croskey Lanni, who merged with CBIZ. We still have the same 2 accountants, and the cost is similar.

Bruce then addressed our computer situation, stating recent problems, it is over 10 years old, and does not have the capability to convert to Windows 11 in October. Bruce reviewed the estimate given by Classic Computer Repair of \$986.70. This amount includes a new Dell desktop computer, data transfer, and installing the printer/scanner. After discussion, Fred moved to approve the Classic Computer Repair estimate for this purchase and set-up, seconded by Herb. Motion passed.

Last, Bruce discussed the need for an online payment system, where integration is needed to capture information with our current system. After discussion, Charlene suggested we set up a committee to make this happen. Volunteers for this committee are Herb, Bruce, Becky and Wayne. Also, Charlene will contact Classic Computer Repair for their possible assistance.

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

Membership & Communication: Wayne stated we currently have 346 members, adding that postcard reminders have been mailed recently to those who have not yet renewed, along with a letter that was mailed to new property owners. A QR code was included in these mailings.

Becky said that help is needed over and above our core of HLPOA Board members. She will compose an email to our members, asking for skill sets in a variety of areas and a list will be made for these volunteers.

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

AIS Containment

Our best sources of information on the containment or spread of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) in Higgins Lake are the DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting) boat harvest reports from HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation) and the MTT report from DNR on the lagoon. MTT harvested 300 bags in 16 days in the lagoon. Only thin quantities of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) were reported along with unidentified quantities of Starry Stonewort (SSW) in each of the 16 days.

The HLF report covers all 18 of their harvest permit areas. HLF harvested a total of 377 bags from 7.5 acres in 35 days. All of the 18 areas had some EWM present and 12 of the 18 had SSW. The density of these AIS is reported as thin, moderate or dense relative to the native plants present.

The attached SSW report tracks the change in densities reported for the past six years. It shows that for 2024, the density is unchanged or reduced in all areas compared to 2023 except for Chaney Point. This is the first year that any SSW was reported at Chaney Point and only thin quantities were reported. That seems to indicate that SSW is generally being held in check.

A similar tracking report for EWM is attached, covering the past three years. The Flag Point permit areas continue to be the “hot spots” and could possibly be getting worse. It is impossible to tell for certain from the harvest report because areas 2 and 3 have always been at the dense level. The three Flag Point permit areas accounted for 256 bags of the 377 total (68%) from 2.5 of the 7.5 acres harvested.

The only areas that showed growth of density in 2024 are permit areas 13 and 14 for the sunken island and the sunken boat respectively. On the positive side, Pine Bluffs, Hoffman Avenue, Model A Car Frame, the dam and Old Point Comfort areas all showed reductions in density. We really do need some additional AIS checking at the major boat accesses and elsewhere to avoid surprises, especially for new invasive species.

Road End Inspections: Plans are being made for more frequent road end inspections this summer.

Roscommon County Safety Meeting is scheduled for May 14th.

Starry Stonewort Spread Tracking in Higgins Lake

Based on DASH Harvesting Reports

<u>HLF Permit Site</u>	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
#1 Flag Point	thin	NR	dense	dense	thin	thin	
#2 Flag Point	>thin	dense	thin	moderate	thin	thin	
#3 Flag Point	>thin	NR	NR	moderate	moderate	thin	
#4 Pine Bluffs	NR	NR	dense	dense	moderate	moderate	
#10 Chaney Point	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	thin	
#11 Near Dam	thin	NR	dense	moderate	thin	NR	
#12 S. State Park	NR	NR	NR	NR	dense	NR	thin
#13 Sunken Island	NR	NR	NR	NR	thin	NR	NR
#15 Island	thin	NR	NR	>thin	NR	thin	thin
#16 Old Pt Comfort	NR	dense	>thin	moderate	moderate	thin	
#17 Detroit Point	>thin	NR	NR	>thin	moderate	thin	thin
#18 Detroit Point	>thin	NR	NR	>thin	thin	moderate	thin
S. State Park Lagoon	NR	NR	dense	dense	dense	dense	dense
N. State Park	NR	thin	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
W. Access	NR	NR	dense	NR	thin	NR	NR
Gerrish Marina	NR	thin	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Thin	<15%						
Moderate	15-60%						
Dense	>60%						
NR	None Reported						

Eurasian Water Milfoil Tracking in Higgins Lake

Based on HLF DASH Harvesting Reports

<u>HLF Permit SIT E</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
#1 Flag Point	moderate	moderate	moderate
#2 Flag Point	dense	dense	dense
#3 Flag Point	dense	dense	dense
#4 Pine Bluffs	dense	dense	moderate
#5 Hoffman Ave	thin	moderate	thin
#6 Hoffman Ave	thin	thin	thin
#7 Model A Car	dense	moderate	thin
#8 Triangle Dr	thin	thin	thin
#9 Triangle Dr	thin	moderate	moderate
#10 Chaney Pt	thin	thin	thin
#11 Dam	dense	dense	moderate
#12 S State Pk	moderate	moderate	moderate
#13 Sunken Is	thin	thin	moderate
#14 Sunken Bts	thin	thin	moderate
#15 Treasure Is	thin	thin	thin
#16 OPC	moderate	dense	moderate
#17 S Detroit Pt	dense	moderate	moderate
#18 N Detroit Pt	dense	dense	moderate
	>15%	15-60%	<60%

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

GLUA Activity in February

Due to the Lyon Township Board's recent activity in opposition to the proposed GLUA (Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority) sewer system, the GLUA Board of Directors passed a resolution asking the two sponsoring townships to rescind the GLUA operating charter.

GIS (Geographic Information System) Layered Mapping of Septic Systems and Wells

Mark Jarski updated us on progress at CMDHD (Central MI Division of the Health Department). Here is what Mark offered as a progress report:

CMDHD has posted a new (32 hour) permanent clerical job for the Roscommon office. Samantha, who has been half time at Clare and half time in Roscommon, bid for a full-time open position at Clare. CMDHD has 10 or 12 folks who have already signed the posting for Roscommon. They expect that position to be filled quite soon. The clerical side of the Roscommon job will be easier to train for than the GIS mapping, so Jennifer Smejkal will likely spend more time on the GIS work after training the new hire.

Jennifer is now getting several hundred points per week onto the Lyon map in her spare time. However, she is keen to get more help with that effort as soon as it can be accommodated! There are still a few thousand points in Lyon and Gerrish yet to go.

Mark is hopeful that the internal shuffling around will settle down in a week or so, and the volunteer efforts offered by HLPOA members can be brought on soon (March??) for helping out. Eventually, the mapping would be available for public outreach and would help to clarify the need for a sanitary sewer system in our watershed. For a good example: <https://www.cmdhd.org/cedarriverwatershed>

Flow Rate Measurements in the Cut River

The February Cut River Flow Rate measurement is planned for the week of 02/17/2025. The measurement planned for the week of 02/10/2025 was delayed due to severe weather.

These results will be posted on the HLPOA website under the Lake Level History tab.

Water Quality Sampling in the Cut River

Water samples were collected on 02/11/2025. The level of phosphorus was 0.11 mg./l. The maximum level for non-polluting tributaries to rivers is 0.05 mg/l phosphorous. The Cut River continues to pollute the Muskegon River watershed even in the Winter. The analysis will be posted under the Water Quality tab.

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

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

HLSIO: Greg presented the following report from Duncan Lawrence, HLSIO President:

At our January meeting, several topics were discussed:

- SIS (Swimmers Itch Solutions) Contract — The contract is in process and will be discussed at next HLSIO meeting (2/19/25). HLSIO intends to do similar projects as in 2024, including merganser relocation if any broods are found on Higgins Lake this season.
- Website — minor updates were made, including Greg Semack's year-end communication was added.
- Canada Goose Removal — Permits have been filed to have two visits to Higgins Lake this summer to destroy nests/eggs with Goose Busters, the firm we have used for several years. HLSIO plans to request HLPOA's support in having its' membership report any known nests on their property.
- Michigan Lakes & Streams Association Convention — HLSIO is providing support for a presentation at the 4/26/25 Michigan Lakes & Streams Association (MLSA). Presentation lead is Dave Wynne of the Crystal Lake Association, with SIS (Curt or Randy) in attendance and Duncan Lawrence on HLSIO's behalf, supporting removal of mergansers and possibly talking about other research conducted. Primary emphasis of the presentation is to showcase how effective removing mergansers from the lake is in reducing cases/severity of Swimmer's Itch. This is an important presentation, as some "experts" continue to refute the effectiveness of merganser removal.

Additionally, Mike Purkey and Duncan Lawrence presented to the Roscommon Rotary on 2/6/25 an overview of HLSIO's efforts to address Swimmer's Itch. There were about 20 Rotary attendees in person and via Zoom. The presentation was very well received. The Village Manager (Ron Alden) reinforced how the economy was impacted in the 2015 timeframe, with numerous calls from tourists asking about swimmer's itch. A PDF of the presentation will be considered for future applications (e.g., presenting to other local groups/associations that may be interested in topic, broader sharing by HLPOA to membership/select groups, selected charts for inclusion in other publications, etc.).

PAC: Greg reported the following:

Roscommon County

The Roscommon County Commissioners have requested a permit to modify the Higgins Lake dam. Engineering drawings were done by Prein – Newhof, cost of approx. \$8,000. Money loaned to the county by the HLLC (Higgins Lake Land Conservancy) is expected to be paid back by the dam SAD (Special Assessment District). Modification involves putting rocks in the floor of the constant open area which is suspected of being approx. 12 inches below the normal bed now. These rocks will bring the opening above where the floor bed started out to be when the dam was built in 2007. County has yet to hear from EGLE or receive the permit.

Court cases: The dam SAD has yet to be scheduled but is now anticipated to be in April or May with a decision coming in the fall.

PA 112 case in Federal court. The judge (Thomas Ludington) has recused himself due to a similar filing by people involving the Sanford Lake (Four Lakes) dam as the outcome of this case could affect the case involving Sanford Lake and this judge has a home on Sanford Lake. The case has now been referred to Judge Judith Levy. As of this date, nothing is scheduled.

Gerrish Township

Nothing much is new although the health of Higgins Lake initiative has begun. Anyone interested in being involved with one of the Committees can get information on how to join from the Gerrish Township website.

Look under HOHL tab for planning and timing. This information is very extensive and should give anyone interested a comprehensive idea of what the HOHL is looking for and intending.

Committees include:

- Steering committee
- Master Plan
- Science
- Finance
- Communications
- Lake Data
- Universal database
- New Lake Testing
- Well Testing
- Documentation
- Road ends
- Fertilizer
- Septic Ordinance

I want to remind everyone that Gerrish Township meetings are streamed so you can keep engaged even if you can't get to the Gerrish Township Hall.

Lyon Township

I have no further report about Lyon Township at this time although people are paying attention and noting things that are being done.

GLUA

GLUA has asked the townships to disband GLUA. The reasons stated are that:

“The purpose of GLUA is to improve, enlarge, extend, maintain and operate a sewage disposal system

And that On Dec 2nd, 2024, Lyon Township adapted resolution #2024-007 titled. Determination on advancing the construction of a STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pump) Sewer system near Higgins Lake and resolved as followed, 1) the Township board will not move forward with the proposed STEP sewer system as has been presented; 2) the Township board will not move forward with the next steps of the Special Assessment District process for a STEP sewer project and, 3) All resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith shall be and same are hereby rescinded.

Now, therefore, in order to eliminate any residual liability to either of the constituent municipalities due to the elimination of the reasons for creation of GLUA; it is recommended by GLUA that both Gerrish Township and Lyon Township initiate the necessary steps to dissolve GLUA. Any action should include but not be limited to ensuring the return in full of any funding help by GLUA which was donated, or if not available, those portions of donated funds be returned in prorated shares to the donor(s), after payment of any outstanding expenses.”

This motion was passed 5 to 1. Paul Bertrand was the lone No vote. (Dave Hall was not in person.)

Now Lyon Township has reservations about ending GLUA and they suggest repurposing the GLUA Mission so as to lay claim to the million-dollar grant that was awarded to GLUA. Paul Bertrand and Tim Monet have both individually contacted EGLE (MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy) and Representative Jack Bergman's office about how they might go about getting the money. As yet, nothing has been determined in this regard.

Ongoing Business:

Mackinac Bridge Tower Tour Raffle: Charlene asked that Board members mail their ticket sales to the office, adding we have 2 months left to sell tickets. Charlene also shared that Roscommon Sheriff Ed Stern will be present for the raffle drawing at noon on April 30, 2025.

New Business:

Well testing: Patty asked how we can educate our members about the importance of having their wells tested. Curt added it is a simple procedure to submit one's water sample, acquiring results in 24 hours. Fred noted areas checked by the Department of Health, such as total coliforms, e-coli-forms, phosphorous, nitrates and nitrites. Bruce asked if we could offer assistance to our members via Raven Analytical Laboratory. Fred will check with Raven Labs about the cost and quantities of samples they can handle. In the Spring newsletter, Becky will include an article to support a "Test Your Water" campaign.

The Board discussed the date for this year's annual meeting and July 19, 2025, was determined.

A discussion was held about a date for the *Sips, Chips and Dips* fundraiser. The date of Thursday, June 26th was selected.

Adjournment: Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Fred. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

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