



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

Board Meeting Minute

April 21, 2025

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:02 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.

Agenda: Charlene asked that we add the DNR to the agenda, to discuss future plans with them.

President's Comments: Charlene said she hoped everyone had a happy Easter! Charlene then stated that Vicki Springstead, Nancy Lamb, and John Barta from the Higgins Lake Foundation, will be joining us at 9:30.

March Minutes: Patty noted a change under the GLUA section. With that revision, Herb moved to approve the March 17, 2025, Minutes, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Guest Speakers: Greg introduced Vicki Springstead, HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation) Chair, along with HLF Board members Nancy Lamb and John Barta. Vicki said she was appreciative of this opportunity to join us and will give an overview of the HLF 2025 summer agenda. Vicki began with the July 8th presentation from Dr. Luttenton at the MacMullan Center. Further activities were announced, such as the HLF Greenbelt Seminar on July 25th, along with MLSA (MI Lakes & Streams) conference participation, HOHL (Health of Higgins Lake) involvement, and local event support, such as the business expo and art fair, along with the August 2nd Awareness Day fundraiser sponsorship. Common goals were reviewed, such as AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species), DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting) boat assistance, "Skip the Fertilizer" signage, and DNR and boat wash enforcement, adding that summer employees are needed for boat wash attendants, DASH boat deck hands and divers. Collaborative areas were also discussed, such as sharing data collected for the boat wash and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) opportunities at the high school. Both Nancy Lamb and John Barta will consult

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

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further with John Ogren and Fred Swinehart in these areas. Greg stated that great ideas were exchanged at this meeting and thanked Vicki, Nancy, and John for their input.

Treasurer's Report: The March 31, 2025, financials were presented. There were no questions. In preparation of the year-end statement, Bruce noted that Jack Cornell has spent a great deal of time making final adjustments to our new online QuickBooks system to reconcile with the 2024 CPA fiscal statement, which will be included in the annual packet for our members. One change noted is that "miscellaneous" income will be changed to "outside services", such as internet subscriptions and computer-related work. Thank you, Jack! Bruce also stated that the CPA will require that he and Charlene sign off when the annual report is completed.

Membership & Communication: Wayne stated that we are under budget regarding 2025 memberships. Wayne asked that Board members review the list sent last week, of 2024 members that have not yet renewed for 2025, asking that they contact neighbors and friends. Wayne will send names to each Board member to contact, as well.

Becky shared that the Spring newsletter is ready to go and will be sent shortly. Becky then stated that much research has been done by this committee regarding updating our 19-year-old website. Becky recapped their findings about what is involved, along with cost. Website developers charge anywhere from \$20.00/hour to \$100.00/hour. The project estimate could be \$3K to \$10K. After discussion, it was agreed that we proceed with one piece at a time, starting with the home page.

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

2025 Data Collection: Our scheduled meeting with the DNR and HLF on April 7 was postponed until April 22 by the DNR because of staff commitments to storm damage recovery at Hartwick Pines State Park. At the meeting on April 22, we hope to get the DNR agreement to joint data collection with HLF at the South State Park to reinforce our recommendation to close the lagoon as a boat access.

Drone-ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) Mapping of Aquatic Plant Growth: John will attend a zoom meeting arranged by HLF on May 6 with Dennis Wiand of Zero Gravity Aerial and Kelsey Froelich of the Glen Lake Association to better understand if there is potential to use this technology for Higgins Lake.

Roscommon County Safety Meeting: The spring meeting will be a Zoom meeting on May 14. We are working on finalizing the agenda, which is likely to include a Marine Patrol update, Central Dispatch staffing update, policing plans for July 4, road end sign checks, township plans for Short-Term Rental and Septic Ordinances, and other issues. Your suggestions are welcome.

Dr. Luttenton Presentation at MacMullan Center: On July 8 Dr. Luttenton will make a presentation on the state of Higgins Lake.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

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

The Central Michigan Division of the Health Department (CMDHD) continues to make good progress on their project of Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping of the drinking water wells and septic fields in Lyon and Gerrish Townships. A new permanent employee has been added to the Roscommon County CMDHD office and will concentrate on this project until it is brought to current status. Two volunteers from the HLPOA will be

trained on the “Fetch GIS” application and will assist in the work beginning the week of 04/21. All available information from Lyon Township has been included in the GIS amp. The group will begin working on Gerrish Township data beginning April 21 as well.

Eventually a GIS map of wells and septic fields in the Higgins Lake Watershed will be created for public reference. For an example, please copy and paste this URL into a Google Chrome Browser to view nearby work in progress on the Cedar River.

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

Macro-Invertebrate Survey in The Cut River and Big Creek

The survey teams will be led this year by Duncan Lawrence and are presently scheduled for May 06 and May 07. This survey provides the best assessment of the purity and quality of the environmental state of these waters. Volunteers to help gather and sort the insects for identification and preservation are always welcome. Contact either Duncan or Fred Swinehart if you wish to participate. The weather will be perfect, and it is always great fun!

Biological and Chemical Analysis and Flow Rate in The Cut River

Samples and measurements were taken on April 16 with the assistance of John Davis. The flow rate was estimated to be about 62 cubic feet per second which is near the usual springtime high flow rate. The sample analysis is still being completed.

HLSIO: Higgins Lake Swimmers Itch Organization Update for April 2025, From HLSIO president Duncan Lawrence: Status as of April 21, 2025

- Merganser Relocation Suspended for 2025 — We received word from the DNR on April 14, 2025, that *“The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received notification that our Federal Common Merganser permit is cancelled due to HPAI H5N1 in wild birds. Because of this action from the US Fish and Wildlife Service we are unable to do a common merganser control program in 2025.*
 - HLSIO is actively reaching out to explore potential exceptions, as well as alternative solutions. This includes injecting captured ducks with Praziquantel, which kills the parasite but provides no harm to the duck. Another potential option is euthanizing the ducks, as is done with the Canada Goose in some areas. Unfortunately, the DNR has not been responsive to our inquiries.
- Merganser Resolution Approved -- the Roscommon County Board of Commissioners approved Resolution #2025-04-03 through 2031. Unfortunately, this does not help us with the DNR suspending all aspects of the Merganser Relocation program. However, it does ensure that if we can find a mutually agreeable solution we can act quickly.
- Swimmers Itch Solutions (SIS) Contract — is in process and will be reviewed at the next HLSIO meeting (4/23/25). HLSIO Intends to do similar projects as 2024, including an eDNA study which may be a better measure of the prevalence of active Swimmer’s Itch Parasites. We remain hopeful that an alternative solution can be reached with the DNR.
- Canadian Goose Removal — A permit has been filed to have two visits to destroy nests/eggs with Goose Busters, the firm we have used for several years. A county resolution providing support for this activity is in effect through 12/31/29. HLSIO plans to request HLPOA's support in having its' membership report any known nests on their property after later this Spring
- Michigan Lakes & Streams Association (MLSA) Convention Presentation — HLSIO is providing support for a presentation at the 4/26/25 MLSA Convention. 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 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.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

Gerrish Township

In news involving Gerrish Township, Greg Reported that the First date for the Gerrish Township attorney to talk to Lyon Attorney about dissolving GLUA was to be 4-10, then put off to 4-17, which was last Thursday I have no information about whether that meeting took place.

Gerrish has installed Cristi Gilliam as their new Fire Chief, taking over from Jim Fisher. Cristi has been working as Assistant Chief for years and has an extensive background in EMS.

Lyon Township

Lyon supervisor Paul Bertrand has stated there is a difference between ordinance violations and police power violations and intends for things to be organized in the future with those delineations in mind. Exactly what he intends by this is not yet understood.

Supervisor Bertrand also said that there would be a new view on road end use. No further explanation has yet been given.

A septic ordinance is being suggested that is said to be based on point of sale and or time of transfer.

Roscommon County

In a report about Houghton Lake made by Chase Schepke, he said that a rainfall of 3.5 recently created a rise at Houghton Lake of 7 inches. The level of Houghton Lake has been a much-discussed topic and speakers on both sides of the argument spoke during public comment.

Chase also said that there are new downstream gauges at Houghton Lake that measure lake level.

During public comments, Craig Cotterman talked about flooding. Chase says flooding was due to rain not lake level, as did one other person who serves on the Houghton Lake Advisory Board for Lake Level.

The CRAF building is sought for space for a victim assessment center. More information will come later, but it does seem like the county commissioners are in favor of supporting this project.

Greg suggested that the lobbying be increased specifically for the purpose of addressing lake issues with legislators and people within the DNR / DEQ. These people may be more able to help accomplish necessary things that the people we have been dealing with locally are not addressing. Motion by Greg to approve an additional \$1500.00 per month for additional lobbying. Motion seconded by Herb. Motion passed.

No date is yet set for the dam SAD appeal but requests for Cross Appeal submission have been made to parties who have not yet submitted such and this happens usually close to the end of the process before scheduling.

Ongoing Business: Charlene reminded all of the Board vacancy and to forward potential candidates to the executive committee.

The *Sips, Chips & Dips* fundraiser on July 2nd was discussed and Charlene asked for assistance.

Charlene reviewed the needs for the July 19th annual meeting. The proxy was reviewed. Charlene moved to approve the proxy form today, seconded by Herb. Motion passed. Bruce will follow up regarding the year-end financials. Some committee reports are still needed. Guest speakers were discussed. Last, Herb reviewed the cost to reserve the High School auditorium, which greatly increased vs last year's cost. Alternative locations will be considered.

New Business: The AIS Landing Blitz was discussed and Charlene asked for volunteers. John and Fred will volunteer at the North State Park on July 5th. Charlene will follow up with Wayne & Susan Brooks to assist at the West Launch.

Charlene noted that signatures are needed for the Conflict of Interest form and asked Board members to stop by the office when they are in town.

Adjournment: Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Greg. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 A.M.

The next meeting will be May 19, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.