



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

Board Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2025

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, Wayne Brooks, Dennis Corte, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, and Fred Swinehart. Patty Dennis and Curt DeVoe were absent.

Agenda: Herb asked to review the Board candidates running for office.

President's Comments: Charlene introduced Dennis Corte and thanked him for his interest in joining the HLPOA Board.

May Minutes: The May 19, 2025, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report: The May 31, 2025, financials were presented and there were no questions.

Bruce then discussed our online QuickBooks accounting system, where assistance is needed for monthly input. It was decided to procure more information from Jack Cornell, as to what exactly is necessary to produce our financial information. The finance committee will meet, gather information, and report back next month. Next, a discussion was held about 2 expenses. Herb moved to donate \$100 to Huron Pines, seconded by Fred. Motion passed. Next, John moved to donate \$2,000 to the Roscommon County Marine Patrol, to extend the number of patrols on Higgins Lake this summer, seconded by Fred. Motion passed. Bruce then brought up the interest rates being paid on our accounts and recent changes made at Huntington Bank. After extensive research, he was able to secure a customer retention rate of 2.5%, up from 1.4%, for our Money Market Account (MMA). Also, \$30,000 was transferred from the general fund to the MMA, with \$110,000 transferred to open a 5-month CD for \$110,000 at 3.05%. He recapped that over a year, these changes would yield over \$2,000 in additional interest income. Thank you, Bruce!

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

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

Membership & Communication: Wayne shared that the 2025 member directories were mailed last week. He thanked the volunteers who assisted him in this mailing: Becky, Fred, Herb, Charlene, Greg, Karen Cornell and Susan Brooks. Wayne added that the directory is a profitable venture for us due to area advertisers. Wayne also thanked Ric Blamer, Charlene, and Patrick, from Dealers Supply, for compiling the directory.

Wayne reported that we now have a PayPal account set up for online memberships. The committee (Wayne, Patty, Bruce, and Dennis) will continue their endeavors to complete the necessary guidelines to have this in place soon.

Becky thanked Kathleen for her help with the *Sips, Chips, and Dips* fundraiser announcement.

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

Road End Checks: Members of the committee checked all the road end locations around the lake. The road end post and Public Notice sign was found missing at Hillcrest Road. A permit application to install a replacement post has been submitted to the Roscommon County Road Commission.

Typical road end docks are linear with perhaps one horizontal member for access to the lake. However, the platform at the Hillcrest Road dock has seven additional dock segment sections. And, the nearby Williams Road dock has a widened platform; three dock sections wide. The Lyon Township Road end dock permit application is a simple, one-page document that focuses largely on insurance requirements and does not seem to require a schematic of the dock to be installed. However, the application does reserve the right to “ensure location of a dock does not obstruct ingress or egress from the Lake.”

In Gerrish there are two minor issues that Chief Muszynski is aware of.

Also, in response to questions to EGLE in Gaylord, John has learned that they only get involved in permitting permanent association docks and not seasonal docks. That seems to indicate that our Higgins Lake associations are free to make changes as long as they do not block access for others.

DNR Data Collection: We will coordinate with HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation) and start parked trailer checks when HLF starts the interview work with boat owners arriving at the South State Park. I expect this work to start before July 4th weekend.

South State Park: We replaced a boat wash wand that was driven over and destroyed last weekend at the South State Park.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

GIS 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.

Internal support for Jennifer Smejkal and Elissa McNicholl in the Roscommon County office of the CMDHD has been secured. Contractors from the Fetch GIS Company will be hired for the remainder of this fiscal year. This

expanded CMDHD office team will speed completing the “Purple Dot” location identifiers on the remaining Gerrish Township properties for which scanned permit documents are available.

In addition, a new volunteer from the HLPOA is being trained on the “Fetch GIS” application. There will soon be four volunteers assisting the Roscommon County CMDHD personnel with this project. The “Purple Dot” identifiers for Lyon Township have been completed to the extent that documentation is available. This team is currently working to map the physical location of documented septic fields for each property on the base map for Lyon Township.

Once the “Purple Dot” identification and existing scanned permit attachments have been completed for Gerrish Township by the CMDHD office staff, this volunteer team will begin to map that area also.

Future funding for this project is an issue. The current CMDHD 2024 budget is sufficient for the above activities until September 30, 2025. Funding for this project in the 2025 Fiscal Year has not yet been secured in the current State of Michigan budget negotiations. Grant Funding to support this work from EGLE Non-Point Source (Section 319) Funding may be applied for in January 2026 for spending in the 2026 FY beginning October 1, 2026. Therefore, local and regional funding may be required to maintain project momentum through calendar year 2025/2026.

Macro-Invertebrate Survey in The Cut River and Big Creek

Duncan Lawrence led the survey team this year. The Cut River survey was done on May 7th. The Big Creek survey was done on May 13th. The differentiation of species found in these surveys provides the best assessment of the environmental purity and quality of these waters.

Amanda Paige from the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly was there to assist in the survey and to prepare the assessment report on the team’s findings. Her report rated Big Creek “Good” and noted it improved over the fall of 2024. She rated the Cut River as only “Fair” but improved from the fall survey of 2024 as well.

To view the complete summary and complete data sets please copy and paste into your browser the Macro Invertebrate Survey site in the HLPOA/Environmental Committee tab shown below:

<https://hlpoa.org/macro-invertebrate-surveys/>

Earl Townsend generously provided permission for the teams’ access to the Cut. Joel Schmidt provided access for the Big Creek site.

Biological and Chemical Analysis and Flow Rate in The Cut River

Water samples were taken on 06/09. Notably, the Phosphorous and Generic Coliform levels following the Memorial Day weekend were much higher than for the earlier months.

	P, mg./liter	Generic Coliforms, cfu/ml.**
Jan ,14	N.D.	3.0
Feb., 24	N.D.	141.4
March 19	0.03	13.4
April 16	N.D.	58.3
May 14	N.D	38.4
June 9	0,05*	689.3

*This level of Phosphorous in a tributary creek or river is considered by the EPA to be a pollution source.

** CFU + Colony forming Units per 100 ml.

Flow rate measurements were made with the assistance of John Davis on 06/16. The flow rate was estimated to be about 51.8 cubic feet per second, which is near the usual springtime high flow rate.

HLSIO: Higgins Lake Swimmers Itch Organization (HLSIO UPDATE) May 2025, From HLSIO president Duncan Lawrence

Status as of June 16, 2025

- Merganser Relocation Suspended for 2025 — No change in the status on our ability to actively manage the Mergansers in 2025. While we have had some conversations with representatives, as well as our consultants, who are eager to help, however, realistically nothing is likely to change soon enough for us to be able to remove ducks in 2025. Greg Semack is leading this effort and created a short summary of the Swimmer's Itch situation and alternative solutions with the Merganser removal that was shared with these individuals under HLPOA letterhead (attached)
- Water Exposure Study - We have launched our 2025 study, but currently participation is low. We need more volunteers. An email will be sent shortly (HLPOA and HLSIO database) in hopes of upping participation. New in 2025 is a paper-based tracking option for participants (e.g., track water exposure on paper, take a picture and send it in...we do the rest).
- Fundraising Dinner, Thursday August 14 -- As we have done in the past, a fundraising dinner will be held at the Witt Barn, with Catering by Fred's and music by Taylor Perry. A flyer has been created, and tickets are available.
- Swimmers Itch Solutions (SIS) Bird Survey — the first wave of our 2025 Bird Survey is behind us. Additionally, there are a couple Merganser broods that have been identified on the lake.
- Canadian Goose Removal — Goose Busters has visited us twice this year and has destroyed 6 nests and 29 eggs.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

Local politics:

Gerrish Township

The GT board has received a recommended Short Term Rental ordinance from the Planning Commission and is expected to move forward with potential changes and legal review. These ordinances may not go into effect yet in 2024, but it will likely be in place and effective by next summer. At the monthly work session and the regular meeting there were quite a few people who spoke about the STRs and most seemed to favor a controlling ordinance. Next to be considered in Gerrish Township will be a septic ordinance, coordinated with the progress of the Health of Higgins Lake project. A new cell tower is well on its way to approval. The tower will be along but back significantly from county road 100 near the Dollar General store and will improve the cell signals on the east side of the lake. If things move quickly, it may be active sometime in the fall. First equipment will be for Verizon, AT & T and Boost Mobile. Many other carriers use the signals from those companies.

Health of Higgins Lake has had their orientation meeting and committees have been formed and the assigned work is ready to be carried out.

Lyon Township

Things still seem to be a work in progress mode in Lyon Township. The new board threw out a short-term rental ordinance created by the last board and has asked their current Planning Commission to create a new STR Ordinance. The holdover members of their PC have expressed their desire to implement the same ordinance that was recently removed. All three agenda points in their latest Planning Commission meeting were eventually tabled until the PC members could get more direction from the Lyon Board. Also, the Township Supervisor has asked for what everyone is calling a chicken ordinance so residents that meet qualifications can have chickens and potentially other farm animals at their houses. Their PC thinks this is a bad idea and does not intend to work on this without further input from the supervisor.

County

The county has prepared a lake management manual that asks to bank water at Houghton Lake. The county asked the court to approve this manual, and approval was granted at the May 30th hearing. Many people came to speak and most spoke in support of anything that could allow the water to be higher than the court ordered height. Three people spoke against it and Greg believes will be appealing that decision. One of those people is former circuit court judge Micheal Baumgartner. The county continues to state that they will be doing things procedurally the same for each lake which may mean that banking water is headed to Higgins Lake at some point. The county intends to go forward with creating the appropriation decisions about the Higgins Lake SAD. They had been waiting for the dam SAD appeal to take place but they have decided they want to go ahead now.

GLUA

GLUA (Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority) is trying to determine how to give back unspent donation money. In their last meeting, they decided to hire an attorney to tell them how to do this. Phil Czech reports that in a tax letter he read previously, the correct method was to give all the excess money to a 401(c)3. In this case, the most logical organization would likely be the Higgins Lake Foundation. HLPOA, as a c-4, will likely not be receiving any

money back. The exact amount they will be returning is somewhere between 40 – 50K. GLUA is also waiting to hear if the property they had intended for use as the water processing center is capable of providing such. The DNR was supposed to be making this determination but has yet to report. Paul Bertrand made a point to call out the HLF and HLPOA for their part in advocating for the sewer saying that he believed that it caused great stress in the community. Vicki Springstead refuted that accusation during public comment. There are no future GLUA meetings scheduled at this time.

Ongoing Business: Charlene discussed the needs for the annual meeting and said she would advise us on the time for the rehearsal on July 18th. Becky added that we need a sign at the high school, to direct members to the MacMullan Center. Charlene then stated that the annual meeting packet is complete, except for finalizing the agenda. Last, Charlene said that the *Sips, Chips and Dips* fundraiser announcement was sent last week. People can purchase tickets via the Eventbrite link or mail checks to the office. Herb reviewed the Board candidates running for office, where 4 terms are up, along with 2 Board members that are completing terms for 2 past Board member vacancies.

Adjournment: Fred moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Herb. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:22 P.M.

The next meeting will be August 18, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.