
HIGGINS LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2026

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



President's Letter

Dear Higgins Lake Neighbors,

Fall is just beginning to show itself up here at Higgins Lake. This summer was full of dedicated efforts to protect our treasured lake, and this newsletter highlights several of those accomplishments.

Thanks to your continued membership and support, we are able to carry out this vital work.

Please enjoy this Fall issue!

Best regards,

Charlene Cornell - President, HLPOA

Dedicated to Preserving the Quality & Beauty of Higgins Lake

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- Thank You Donors!

SAD Hearing: Oct. 15th

- The SAD Hearing lead by Phil Ellison will be in Judge Bennett's 34th Circuit Court in Roscommon on Thursday, Oct. 15th starting at 2 p.m.
-

West Access Data Collection Project

The project was completed on Labor Day with a total of 459 interviews with boat operators. The interviews involved asking the most recent lake the boat had entered, when that occurred and an inspection of the boats and trailers for visible weeds.

The interviews were documented on data sheets and took place on busy Saturdays and Sundays from July 11 - Sept. 9, 2026.

Key results follow:

- 375 of the boats were last used in Higgins Lake, 81.7%; the other 84, 18.3%, in other lakes.
- 5.4% of the 459 boats had visible weeds; 5.6% of the Higgins Lake boats and 4.8% of the others. The 4.8% of others with weeds were a total of four boats.
- 29.7% of the others had been in another lake in the previous four days or less when weed transfer is most likely to occur. The 29.7% of others were a total of 25 boats.

A draft report on the project has been circulated to the HOHL Subcommittee (Bob Frye, John Barta and John Ogren) to be included in overall AIS recommendations to the Science Committee. It will also be used for our fall meeting with local DNR.

One point not to miss is that the four boats from other lakes with weeds represent less than 1% of the 459 boats. It will be hard to justify full-time inspection coverage for that purpose. The committee will also consider option to segregate inspection of Higgins Lake boats that carry limited new AIS risk from inspection of the visitors from other lakes.

Brook Trout Habitat Improvement in Big Creek: May 2023 - Sept. 2026

The Big Creek Lane Association and HLPOA agreed to work together to sponsor a project to improve the brook trout habitat in Big Creek involving young people and students.

The efforts involved small teams of young people, supervised by BCL and HLPOA members, constructing several "single vane" wood deflectors in the creek.

Five structure groups have been built and have successfully survived the very high flows of the 2026 spring thaw. The results have been very promising, especially for the construction just upstream of the artesian spring by the property of Mick Bowles and Don Cook.

Before the installation, a wide expanse of shallow sand bottom was exposed. After three years of time, an excellent growth of native plants is now protecting the bank from erosion and the creek from further siltation. The water is now deeper and there is better cover for the trout.

BEFORE



AFTER



Anecdotal comments from residents confirm that the local fishery has improved in the years since the Dewey Avenue culvert was replaced and these stream improvements have had time to take effect.

Nick Newman



Higgins Lake Swimmers Itch Organization Hosts Annual August Fundraiser

More than 120 Higgins Lake supporters gathered on Thursday, Aug., 13th at Witt's Barn in Roscommon for the annual fundraising dinner of the Higgins Lake Swimmers Itch Organization (HLSIO).

The evening combined dinner, live music and fellowship with an update on one of Higgins Lake's most persistent recreational and environment concerns: Swimmer's Itch.

The HLSIO has been working to combat Swimmer's Itch at Higgins Lake for 12 years, supporting scientific research and pursuing practical ways to reduce the problem and improve the lake experience for residents and visitors.

The evening's featured speaker was Dr. Randy DeJong, who provided attendees with the latest information regarding Swimmer's Itch at Higgins Lake. His presentation focused on the current state of the problem and continuing scientific efforts to better understand and control the parasite responsible for Swimmer's Itch.

The fundraiser provided an important opportunity not only to update supporters on the latest developments, but also to raise funds that will HLSIO to continue its efforts.

For more information, please visit HLSIO's website: hlsio.org



New Board Member & Administrative Assistant

The HLPOA Board is pleased to welcome two new members to our team: Julie Dunn joins as a Board Member and Billie Moore is our new Administrative Assistant. The experiences and talents they bring have already proven themselves.



Julie Dunn



Billie Moore

Ponar Bottom Sampling Boat Development: Progress to Date

The development of a bottom sampling capability is being pursued. The team of John Davis, John Barta, Melanie Brown, Duncan Lawrence and several others have assembled a prototype vessel based on a customized 24' pontoon boat.

This boat has been equipped with a loaned Ponar type sampler and sampler handling accessories. Several trial runs have been successfully completed and several more are planned for the near future. The program is planned to be better defined and carried out next summer to take advantage of the learnings gained from the underwater video work of the Divers.

*John Davis, Melanie Brown,
John Barta & Duncan Lawrence*

Second Underwater Video & Environmental Survey Project: Aug. 28 - 30

The Higgins Lake Exploration Initiative goal is to share with the community a unique view of the lake from the bottom up. This Initiative is part education and part science, creating a baseline for future research. A team of volunteer professional divers again visited Higgins Lake as part of this project. The series of dives completed in this session were a follow up to the ones done earlier by this group on May 30 and 31, 2026.

This project aims to conduct a thorough and consistent study of the lake from the bottom up, to monitor changes over time including the impact of invasive plant species and mussels like zebra and quagga mussels. Sponsoring organizations are the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association (HLPOA), the Higgins Lake Foundation (HLF) and the Health of Higgins Lake (HOHL).

A team of eight divers participated, six of whom are certified Dive Masters. Greg Purkey, Dive Master, recruited the divers and oversaw their assignments. The divers traveled from as far away as Columbus, Ohio, with most coming from the Flint and Detroit areas.

Three divers have personal connections to the lake, living nearby with their families. In total, 18 dives were completed in this series. Each dive involved two divers working together, exploring and making video recordings at lake depths ranging from about 15 feet to over 90 feet. The dives began at eighteen specific points on the lake, including near Treasure Island, the sunken islands, Flag Point, and others. The starting points are all GPS located and transect line directions from dive start to dive completion were recorded so future dive track videos can be replicated very closely.

The dive team has gathered more than three hours of video footage. The next step is to catalog the files and photos, edit the footage, and produce engaging, informative videos like those found on YouTube. The team of Ed Panyard, Jamie and Melanie Brown will be working on this task in the days to come. Watch HLPOA for posting of videos!!



HLPOA Board Member Positions Available!!

We currently have an opening available on the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association (HLPOA) Board.

If you are interested in applying, please forward a short resume to hlpoa0@gmail.com or mail directly to:

HLPOA
PO Box 55
Roscommon, MI 48653

Thank You Susan Semack!

A special thank you to Susan Semack for all of the hours she spent to help make it an easy transition of administrative duties!

EGLE Webinar Series this Fall

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is offering two webinar series this Fall that may be of interest to you:

- **Wednesday, Oct. 21st:** *How'd That Get There? The Invasive Species Regulation Process in Michigan*
- **Thursday, Nov. 12th:** *What Does it Mean? New External Firewood Quarantine Explained*

For more information and to register:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MI/DEQ/bulletins/42b68bc>

Cut River Flow Rate

Bacteria increased through the summer months, as expected. Some of these coliforms may be pathogenic. Note that nitrate and nitrite are almost always absent and phosphorous is almost always present in excess.

The amount of phosphorus leaving Higgins Lake raises concern. Water leaving Higgins Lake via the Cut River enters the Muskegon River Watershed and is technically a source of pollution due to these levels of phosphorous.

For the full chart tracking 2026 Cut River water flows, please click [here](#).

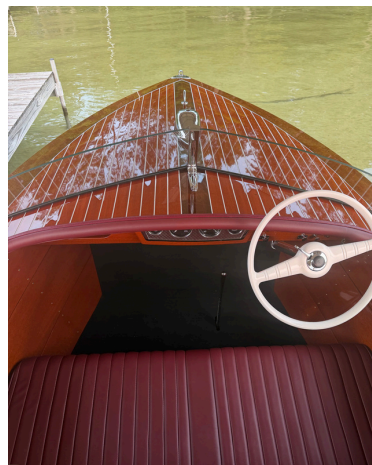
1938 Higgins Lake Chris-Craft Restored, Wins Award

Mae Wes is a 1938 Chris-Craft Runabout owned by the McKinley family of Almeda Beach. She has been owned by the family since purchase date. She was recently named after Wes McKinley and Hazel Mae McKinley (Mr. and Mrs. C. W. McKinley), the family members who purchased her in 1938. She has spent all of her summers on Higgins Lake.

Carefully maintained by the McKinley and Tice families over the years, this beauty has been under restoration since 2023, with the work completed this summer. She debuted at the 58th Annual Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show in Hessel, Michigan in August. At the Show, she was awarded 2nd place in the 17-18 foot Runabout Class.

Mae Wes is typical of boats built in that era. She is a pleasure to cruise on a calm Higgins Lake Day.

If you are interested in having a boat like Mae Wes renovated, Will McKinley would be happy to talk about the process: will@mckinleyhome.com



Mae Wes



Will & Susie McKinley

THANK YOU DONORS!!

General Fund:

Dennis & Tina Doyle, Furioso Cottage, Gerard Groya, Brian & Marti Mackowski, Amelia Michniak, Thomas Morley, Surfside Shores, John & Amy Gregorio

Environmental Fund:

Jan Baldwin, Dennis & Tina Doyle, Furioso Cottage, Paul & Eve Ryznar, John & Amy Gregorio

Legal Fund:

Daniel & Amanda Brown, Stephen & Dixie Dent, Donald Dickerson, Dennis & Tina Doyle, Furioso Cottage, Mark & Lola Holmes, Thomas & Marie Kizer, Keith & Tamla Kleinsmith, Brian Lamerson & Sandra Kneller, Glenn & Ginger Rossow, Paul & Eve Ryznar, Craig & Carol Sable, David & Mary Simone, Julie & Gary Smith, John & Amy Gregorio

In Memory of Clarice Schocke:

Midland District of Camp Curnalia Cottage Owners Association:
CCCOA is pleased to know that a contribution was made in Clarice's memory to help keep Higgins Lake beautiful.

CONTACT HLPOA

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2026-2027 HLPOA Board

President - Charlene Cornell
Vice President - Greg Semack
Secretary - John Ogren
Treasurer - Bruce Carleton
Directors - Wayne Brooks,
Patty Dennis, Curt DeVoe,
Becky Gibson, Fred Swinehart and Julie Dunn

Administrative Assistant -
Billie Moore