



# Portage, Base & Whitewood Owners Association

*Serving the Lakes Community Since 1940*

FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

## A Message from your President

*Mark Teicher*

Fall already! Where did the summer go? Your PBWOA Board continues its job even as the docks come in and the water goes down. We heard from members about the lack of No Wake buoys at the Portage Lake side of the bridge to Little Portage. We have worked with Dexter Township and the Township has acquired the buoys and will be installing them. Without the buoys it appears some boaters "forgot" to slow down.

Special appreciation to the Board for a great summer: shoreline garden tour on two pontoon boats, installation of signage at public access, continuing work with Washtenaw County for the Chain of Lakes Improvement Project, pizza party, boat washes at the public access, CLMP testing and reporting, applying for and getting a grant from the state, supporting Craig Kivi's conservation areas, two boater safety classes, keeping up our excellent website and helping members whenever possible.

Thanks to our members for their dues. Membership by paying dues allows the PBWOA to continue its strength in working with our local governments - Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, Hamburg, Dexter, Putnam and Webster Townships - in fostering the best practices to keep our waterways at their finest.

The board meets monthly, usually the 1st Monday of the month, on zoom and you are invited. Just contact us and let us know you want to zoom in!

### **The PBWOA Board of Directors:**

Mark Teicher, President	Portage Lake
Jon Waitz, Vice President	Baseline Lake
Dave Wilutis, Vice President	Baseline Lake
Jane Ollila, Secretary	Tamarack Lake
Jim Jensen	Whitewood Lake
Jan Arps-Prundeanu	Baseline Lake
Lis Knibbe	Portage Lake
Bob Nester	Little Portage Lake

*As of publication of this Newsletter a couple of new faces to the board have not yet been confirmed. Stay tuned... or if interested in helping, please call one of the listed members above. Thanks!*

## Clean Boats Clean Water Grant Update

*Jan Arps-Prundeanu*

The final reports have been submitted to the state of Michigan in completion of our Clean Boats Clean Waters Grant. It is anticipated that we will be reimbursed \$1655 for the expenses incurred. Our main goal of reaching younger boaters with the Clean Boats Clean Waters message was accomplished via two Boater Safety Classes with 80 participants at Portage Yacht Club and Brighton Police Youth Academy.

The other highlight was installation of signage at the state Portage Boat Access Site reinforcing the message that boaters prevent spreading invasive weeds and other species by cleaning their boats. Because we do not have a water source, we cannot provide actual boat washing at the launch site, which might present a better incentive for boaters. A big thanks to all of the PBWOA board members who helped with the grant activities.



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# Tidbits

by Dave Wilutis

Throughout the recently completed Michigan Lakes and Streams Conference, were many sessions rich in information. The following is a sampling of important topics as well as other lake 'things to know'.

- Due to the Clean Air Policies starting in the 70's, sulfate levels have continued to decline which has reduced acid rain effects in our lakes.
- Chloride levels in the lakes are rising, which affects the lake stratification as well as other lake biology. AVOID salt use on roads and driveways where runoff into our lakes or storm drains that drain into the lake is possible. Try an alternative. Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is a type of deicer that has fewer negative impacts.
- Lake temperatures on average have continued to rise. Winter ice formation on our northern lakes is shrinking and not remaining as long. This ice reduction can affect spawning patterns and phytoplankton development.
- A lake water sample taken on the north side of Base Lake this past summer was analyzed by Brighton Analytical for its nutrient make-up. The results showed that there were elements of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium in our lake water. The good and bad of this: BAD- These nutrients are mainly caused by lawn and farm use of fertilizers. These nutrients are the food source for lake weeds and algae. GOOD - Lake water should be used to water your lawn and gardens. This will help remove nutrients from the lake and save you money from buying fertilizer to spread on your lawn.
- Did you know that phosphorus in our lakes can lay dormant in the sediment at the bottom of the lake? When left undisturbed it does not contribute as much to the growth of lake weeds and algae. BUT, when disturbed by boat traffic (in shallow water), and especially wake boat activity (wake boats create a downward thrust when operating, which creates the big waves they need for wakeboarding), that activity agitates the lake bottom, releasing the phosphorus back into the water column and becomes food for the weeds and algae. Solution: operate wake boats in deeper water!
- Did you know that the burnt ash in your fire pit contains high concentrations of nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potash that can leach out through the ground and into our lakes when it rains? By removing that ash and disposing of it in areas that won't allow it to leach into the lakes, you are doing a great deed that our lakes will thank you for. The ash could be a good food source for your gardens and other areas, away from the lake.

# Lake Water Quality Testing

Jon Waitz

Once again, our Portage, Base, Whitewood Owner's Association has been involved with lake water quality testing and has collected data going back as far as 1975. The board of directors funds the cost for testing on Little Portage, Portage, Baseline, Tamarack and Whitewood Lakes from dues collected from membership. The actual water sampling is being done by PBWOA volunteers on the various lakes. This year we had a team of 6 volunteers doing testing for Secchi Disk (a test to determine the lakes clarity by measuring depth of light penetration) and summer total phosphorus. The data collected by our volunteers is used to help determine changes to our chain of lakes over a broad period of time.

This year's volunteers are:

- Judy Porman, since 1997*
- Jim Collins, since 2002*
- Jim Meyer, since 2007*
- Jon Waitz, since 2013*
- Diane Tryon, since 2014*
- Craig Kivi, since 2015*

All data collected by our team of volunteers is uploaded into The Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP). This is a significant partnership effort between the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Michigan Lake Stewardship Associations, Inc. (MLSA), the Great Lakes Commission, Michigan State University, the Huron River Watershed Council and our PBWOA. The CLMP is a key program in the Michigan Clean Water Corps, a statewide volunteer water quality monitoring network. We are collectively able to gather, analyze and record important data on Michigan lakes with the CLMP partnership, that otherwise would not be available.

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# Portage Lake Natural Shoreline Restoration Project Update

by Craig Kivi

If you live on or anywhere near the Portage Chain of Lakes you will want to see firsthand the incredible underwater photograph results from the Shoreline Restoration and Habitat Improvement project on 2,700' of Portage Lake shoreline done by Natural Shorelines Forever, Golden Drake Realty and volunteers in the community. In a world of far too much conservation and environmental talk and politics, here's a project of doing conservation, of accomplishment, of documented and verified improvement.

Birds, mammals, fish and all kinds of wildlife are now using the habitat and flourishing along the 2,700' shore as not before in recent history. Helpful native plants are returning. The project results have enhanced the health of the lake and have begun to offset the sterile sea walled and sand bottom lakefronts found on 85% of Portage Lake where very little lake life exists.

See the full detailed presentation given at the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership Convention held just last month. The underwater pictures are truly worth a thousand words.

[www.canr.msu.edu/michiganlakes/convention/2022\\_abstracts](http://www.canr.msu.edu/michiganlakes/convention/2022_abstracts)  
- September 15th, 3:45.

There are bonus outcomes. We've published a "Lessons Learned" document, being used statewide and have traveled to and worked with many other lake associations and private lakefront owners statewide.

Working with the Michigan Department of the Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, MSU and DNR, we have an efficient path to help those with small lakefront lots (35' and more) include a "natural feature" on their shoreline which does not interfere in any way with yet increases the fish and wildlife on your shoreline and improves the health of the lake. There are plans for dozens of these projects in the upcoming future.

## Michigan Alphabet Soup

**EPA, DNR, MUCC, EGLE, MLSA, SAD, USFWS, MGLP, MNSP, HABS, HRCOL**

Kudos to any of you who can name each of these terms and extra kudos to any of you who can explain what they do. Melissa DeSimone, Executive Director of MLSA (Michigan Lakes and Streams) has put together a list of the agencies and organizations that all interact in some way with our lakes. Many are governmental agencies that make rules and regulations. Many are organizations that work to provide research and resources.

The entire list is too large to include here, but can be found on our website (PBWOA.org) under Resources, drop down to Michigan Agencies or utilize this link: <http://www.pbwoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/MLSA-Partners-Presentation-with-Links.pdf>. We think you will be amazed at the number of agencies and resources.



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## Protecting our waters, one garden at a time!

By Jan Arps Prundeanu

What a beautiful day we had for our 1st Annual Shore Front Garden Tour on Friday, September 30th. We had 12 participants, including 4 riparians from Portage, and 2 from Whitewood. All had either begun work on their shorefront areas or were hoping to get ideas on how to get started. Washtenaw County was also well represented with 3 employees from the Water Resources Division. From the south shore of Base Line, we identified native plants in the six adjoining gardens. Moving to the pontoon boats, Janee Kronk (Michigan Certified Natural Shoreline Professional) pointed out highlights of gardens on the west shore of Base Line, Loon Lake and Gallagher Lake including the turtle logs she installed.

What is a turtle log? It is basically a log like structure that is anchored near the shore for turtles to use for sunning, relaxing, even hiding. They work well with shorefront gardens that allow access for the turtles.

Missed the tour? No worries, we plan to have hopefully two more tours next Spring/Summer 2023. In the mean time, check out photos of shorefront gardens across the state - found on the Story Map at this link:

<https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/inland-lakes-and-streams/shoreline-protection>



Minnow  
from NautiMi

# Shoreline Stewardship- Ashes, Ashes We All Fall

By Lis Knibbe

(with the help of John Downing, University of Minnesota Duluth)

It's fall. Crisp air brings thoughts of bon fires and burning leaves.

Ironically, while branches and logs in the water can provide important places for fish to spawn and hide from predators, the ashes from burning wood and leaves can be toxic for wildlife in the water and provide lots of food that causes algal blooms. When wood burns it goes through drastic chemical changes making it very unhealthy for lake water. Burning wood releases its carbon into the air and leaves behind ash that is composed of some nasty things - things that are especially bad for lakes.

When wood ash combines with water it forms lye. Wood-ash lye is a little less caustic than the commercial lye used in drain and oven cleaners - not something you want in your lake water. Wood ash contains phosphorus at a concentration about 6 times that found in lawn fertilizers. Most people wouldn't think of leaving a bag of fertilizer where it could spill into the lake, so take the same care with ashes.

Wood ash is a strong base, so when it enters the lake, it can increase the PH of the water from its normal level of 7-8 to over 12. Any level above about 8 becomes increasingly impossible for fish and other organisms in the water to live. Wood ash contains a surprising array of heavy metals (such as zinc, nickel, copper, lead, chromium, arsenic, cadmium and mercury, among others). In high enough concentrations, these can cause problems for people and the many things that live in the lake.

Enjoying a fire near water can be an immensely enjoyable part of recreational experiences. It is important to protect water resources for ourselves and for future generations by making sure ashes are cold and then disposing of them properly where they can't wash into waterways. The solution is easy. Keep burn areas and fire pits in locations where rain water will not wash the ashes in the Lake. Pick-up and dispose of cold ashes properly. If we all pick up and properly dispose of ashes, we can help keep the Huron River Chain of Lakes beautiful and healthy.



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Portage Lake, photo by Melanie Wiley

## EDITORS NOTE

Jane Ollila, Editor

There is a "backbone" in every organization and for the last umpteen years, Dave Moody has been that backbone. He is the face of the PBWOA and it is with great sadness that we announce that Dave has decided it is time for him to step down. The amount of work and the myriad of duties he has handled and accomplished over these years is truly amazing. At one time he was handling the Newsletter (formatting, writing, gathering articles), maintaining the entire membership file (including years of data on the number of members, lakes, etc.), the PBWOA web-site from its initial set-up format, all mailings including printing and formatting labels, secondary signatory on our bank accounts, monitoring and answering questions from members through our email, interpreting and chairing a committee to modify and update our By-Laws and "historian extraordinaire" for his memory and reminders of the correct way to manage things within this organization. Over the last few years, he has relinquished a few of these tasks, one at a time, but was always there to help and counsel the new board member. To say he will be missed is an understatement and "Thank You" just isn't enough. You will be missed!