



Portage, Base & Whitewood Owners Association

Serving the Lakes Community Since 1940

FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

A Message from your President

Mark Teicher

The Huron River Chain of Lakes is proud and lucky to have the Norman A. Wood & Louis P. Kivi Natural Shoreline Preserves on the northwest portion of Portage Lake. These 2,700 feet of protected shoreline and 12 acres were purchased by Craig Kivi in memory of Craig's grandfather and father, and managed by a 501(C)(3) non-profit. EGLE, DNR, MSU and the Huron River Watershed Council have deemed this shoreline and protected land of high value and the last natural area that can filter Portage Lake, as well as is home to many species of fish, wildlife, flora, and fauna.

Unfortunately, residents are using it for a dump! Not only have Craig and others found garbage intentionally dumped there (including an old refrigerator), but they heard that some local property owners were planning on dredging and dumping their dredged muck onto the Preserve. There are very strict restrictions and permits needed for any dredging. Then came Saturday, September 16, 2023. Craig and a friend were out boating on Portage Lake. They noticed a boat backed up to the protected shore with the motor hanging over the shoreline. As they got closer, they saw a huge, shiny, rainbow oil slick, about the size of a football field. They saw a person was changing his lower unit oil, a honey thickness 90 weight oil. Craig said the stench was overwhelming. As they got closer, the person jumped out of his boat with a screwdriver and went to the motor in a hurry. He was putting the engine oil drain plug back in, which meant that the oil was draining onto the shore or into the water, or both. Before he could drive away, Craig and his friend got pictures of the MC numbers. Craig called the Marine Sheriff, DNR and Livingston County officials. They all came out immediately and met Craig. They confirmed the oil spill and made their reports, along with sending their findings to EGLE. An investigation and hopeful prosecution are pending.

So, what can you do? Keep an eye out. If you see something, report it. Call 911, call Craig Kivi (734-478-5730) or me (248-420-9144). In addition, Craig is offering a \$1,000 reward for any information that leads to the arrest and conviction of anyone for dumping in the Preserves.

PBWOA Website

Mary Beth Timmerman

Your PBWOA Board is actively working on an update to the Website. When this is complete, you will notice:

- It will be simple to Renew and Pay for your Membership
- Access to Website information will be straightforward
- There will be a Calendar of Events to keep you up to date



Photo by Heidi Metzger

The PBWOA Board of Directors:

Mark Teicher, President	Portage Lake
Jon Waitz, Vice President	Baseline Lake
Dave Wilutis, Vice President	Baseline Lake
Lis Knibbe, Treasurer	Portage Lake
Jim Jensen	Whitewood Lake
Jan Arps-Prundeanu	Baseline Lake
Bob Nester	Little Portage Lake
Bonnie Swanson	Tamarack Lake
Mary Beth Timmerman	Tamarack Lake

If interested in helping, please call one of the listed members above. Thanks!



PBWOA
PO Box 955
Pinckney, MI 48169

734-471-3141
mail@PBWOA.org
<http://pbwoa.org>

DAM Update

By Jan Arps Prundeanu

Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission (<https://www.washtenaw.org/3460/PortageBase-Line-Lakes>) has identified the need for repairs to the John Flook dam, after one of the gates failed in July, 2023. A public information meeting for all property owners in the lake level assessment district was held on October 25, 2023 at Pathfinder School. There are currently 818 properties in Livingston County and 521 in Washtenaw County in the Lake Level Special Assessment District.

The Commission is actively working on having new, more structurally strong boards fabricated to isolate the dam bays for when the gates are replaced. Scott Miller, (Deputy Commissioner) is hopeful that they can get that completed in time for use around the time they normally lower the lake to winter levels, as these boards would not only be used for repairs but could also be used to maintain the lake level through the winter as we have normally done in years past. The main difference is that they will be less susceptible to leaking, be structurally stronger in order to safely work on the gates, and potentially be easier to replace/remove than the old ones. One bonus would be that they would not be just a one-time use, but could be employed in future years to maintain winter levels.

For a history of the Dam and how the Special Assessment District was formed, please check out the information on our web-site: <http://www.historypbw.org/john-flook-dam/>

Native Plant of the Season

By Jan Arps Prundeanu

Red-Twig Dogwood. Looking for some color in your winter landscape? This shrub will brighten up those winter days with bright red stems. PLUS, it is a native plant that is recommended for rain gardens: it is really good at soaking up water. So, even if you don't have a rain garden, it can be used to prevent run off into the lake. Feral Floral on Nixon Road has one-gallon pots for \$20.00 but they require \$100.00 minimum order. If you are interested in consolidating an order, please let Jan know: janarps60@gmail.com



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:

Jim Collins since 2002

Jim Meyer since 2007

Jon Waitz since 2013

Craig Kivi since 2015

Nancy Cox since 2023

Joan Fitzgibbon since 2023

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 Lakes & Streams 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. The data collected by our volunteers helps determine if there were changes in our chain of lakes over a broad period of time.

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Turning the Corner on Bad Practices

by *Dave Wilutis*

Last April, in our Spring Newsletter, I talked about the need to change our “mindset” when it comes to how we view the need to have “lush, golf course green” lawns right up to the water’s edge.

Within our Huron River Chain of lakes, there are approximately 2,400 lake or river front property owners. ALL these properties abut shorelines and therefore have DIRECT access to waterways that make up the chain of lakes! Each of these properties can easily introduce harmful substances into our lake system, which can negatively affect water quality for everyone.

Our lake and river ecosystems are very delicate and complex. This sensitivity refers to its ability to be changed or altered by outside influences. Think about our lake system as a giant petri dish. Add a little of this and a little of that to a warm petri dish, and in time you have changed the whole ecosystem content in that dish. OUR lake system is no different, especially with documented warmer lake waters we are experiencing. Over the years many harmful things have been introduced into our lake system. Historically, “WE” have unfortunately been the cause. Can “WE” make the positive changes needed to turn this around. The answer is YES.

We have learned from our past bad behavior practices, and are making good positive changes. Following are some key local changes that have had a big positive affect in our lake system:

- Implementation of a lake system-wide sewer system some 35 years ago, replaced individual septic tanks which were known for leeching nutrients from septic fields into the lakes.
- The Lake Improvement Project (SAD), has lake scientists continually monitoring and testing our lakes for negative changes, and then maps out treatment solutions to address those changes.
- Education - The PBWOA, as well as the Huron River Watershed Council, Hamburg Township, Michigan Lakes and Streams Association (MLSA) and others, have provided information to help educate lake and river front owners on better practices around the water’s edge.

Education has become the key ingredient to changing current and past bad practices into good practices to benefit our lake system. It is this writer’s belief that education alone does not always create desired outcomes. In some cases, having a local ordinance supporting a corrective action for the benefit of all, provides the strength behind a good cause. Just this month, Hamburg Township passed an ordinance that restricts the application of lawn fertilizers to no closer than 50 feet from the water’s edge. It further states, fertilizer applications shall not be permitted prior to May 1 and after November 15. This is to prevent direct release of fertilizers into the lakes caused by runoff, due to rain or frozen soil.

This new ordinance is a positive significant change for our lake system. Hopefully, with the adoption of similar ordinances in the other 3 townships abutting our lake system, all of us will see over time, a reduction in unsightly and in some cases harmful algae blooms, excessive invasive as well as non-invasive weed growth, all caused by excessive nutrients (fertilizers) in our lakes. Additionally, the savings homeowners will see from reduced fertilization will hopefully over time reduce treatment cost in the Lake Improvement SAD. This could be the beginning of a watershed moment when “WE” helped fix a problem, caused by our bad practices of the past.

Lakes - Ours to Protect

By *Jan Arps Prundeanu*

What can you do? Soak up that water to prevent run-off into the lake by starting a rain garden.

How do I start? Check out your PBWOA consultation offer: <http://www.pbwoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Reformatted-Rain-Garden-Consulting-Flier.pdf>

If you want to learn more, check out the Rain Garden Classes offered early next year.

Registration is open for rain garden classes offered by Washtenaw County. (County residence is not required). The on-line classes are scheduled for 5 Thursdays beginning January 25th thru February 22nd 10 a.m. to noon.

The in-person classes are scheduled for Wednesdays, noon to 2:30 p.m. beginning April 10th thru May 8th. (Location: to be determined.)

For more information and registration:

<https://www.washtenaw.org/675/Master-Rain-Gardener-Class>

Your PBWOA provides reimbursement (\$89) for all members who complete the course.



Peg Wilutis's Rain Garden

Free Class - Introduction to Lakes

Mary Beth Timmerman

Any PBWOA Member is welcome to take the MSU Introduction to Lakes on-line course, pass the class, and be reimbursed for the cost. It's a 6 Week Course that starts in January 2024. Take a look at canr.msu.edu/lakesonline for more information and learn about Watersheds, Aquatic Plants, Shorelines, Ecology, Law, and Citizen Involvement. The deadline to register is 01/28/24 and the initial cost (which can be reimbursed) is \$115.00.

Thank you for your Continued Support

Melissa DeSimone, MLSA Executive Director

As a riparian property owner, you understand the importance of working together to protect our inland lakes. Michigan Lakes and Streams Association (MLSA) has been helping to protect Michigan's water, working with riparians on their property issues, and providing educational opportunities for waterfront property owners since 1961.

We are grateful for the continuing support we have received from PBWOA over the years. We are able to provide educational resources and important opportunities because of lake associations like yours. Only by working together can we continue our mission to preserve and protect Michigan's inland water for future generations.

2023 has been a very good year for MLSA and our members. For the second year in a row, we provided a reimbursement to members who took the Introduction to Lakes course through MSU extension. This award winning, 6 week course is an excellent way for riparians to learn the best ways to enjoy their lake responsibly.

We also have a new digital offering of The Michigan Riparian magazine for our members that will soon be available to subscribers who receive their magazines through their lake association (like you!). We hope this new format will help to bring important news and information provided in the magazine to even more readers throughout the state. We are grateful to PBWOA's very own Craig Kivi, for writing an excellent article for our fall 2023 issue (Shoreline Wood Habitat Installations for Lakefront Property Owners).

We took an active role this year in working with the Michigan Environmental Council to develop their legislative priorities. The top priority at the moment is working toward a statewide septic code to keep sewage out of our surface and groundwater. I was recently voted onto the board of MEC to represent the interests of our statewide riparian community and I look forward to the important work we can accomplish with all our environmentally minded partners in MEC.

The last thing I will mention, though certainly not least, is that we provide annual support for students who are studying lake sciences or related fields. We provided one undergraduate scholarship and helped to fund two grants for graduate research projects. For the past two years, we have also invited students from the Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University to present their research at our annual conference. We plan to continue these efforts for years to come.

2024 is already looking to be another great year for MLSA and the work we do. We hope you will join us for our 63rd Annual Conference on Friday, April 26 and Saturday, April 27, 2024. The conference will be held in Muskegon, MI which is the home of the Annis Water Resources Institute and we already have some great sessions and field trips planned for that event.

I cannot stress enough how grateful we are for the partnership of PBWOA. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or even just to chat. You can also find out more about MLSA, sign up for our free email newsletter, and donate, subscribe, or join as an individual at our website: mymlsa.org. Follow us on Facebook (@mymlsa), Instagram (@lakesstreams), YouTube, and LinkedIn.

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Photo by Michelle Gervais