



Huron River Chain Of Lakes Association

Serving the Lakes Community Since 1940

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

A Message from your President

Mark Teicher

You may not be aware, our Ore Lake neighbors are living under terrible conditions. They have flooding so significant that they are looking at FEMA relief and Red Cross aid. At times this year they have been under Livingston County Health Department Orders not to swim, not to boat and not to do any recreational activities in Ore Lake. Even today, many Ore Lake residents have to park their cars at neighbors to get a dry spot. Many folks wade through water just to get to their homes. At one-point, raw sewage was dumping into Ore Lake. Many of our neighbors have flooded crawlspaces and garages. Mold and mildew mitigation is unfortunately common.

We can help our neighbors. If you know someone who lives on Ore Lake, call them now and see how you can help. Otherwise, check out the following links and consider inviting a family to come over for lunch or dinner – everyone on Ore Lake can use a little escape from their tension and nightmare – even if just for a home cooked meal. Cook up a pot of chili and take it to an Ore Lake neighbor’s house. See if someone needs help with sandbags or laundering towels. Take a look at their website: [Residents Working Against Huron River Flooding – Working to resolve flooding issues along Ore Lake and the Huron River in Livingston County, MI](#) and on

Facebook. A good contact person is Dr. Amber Bismark at Bismark@oaklanduniversity.edu.

You can check the real-time data on Huron River Water Flow Rates and Water Levels from the USGS website at [Huron River Near Hamburg, MI - USGS Water Data for the Nation](#).



Lake Level Lowering

Mary Beth Timmerman

The start date for the Lake Level Lowering is determined by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and is done in conjunction with the closing of the MDNR boat launch on Portage Lake. Although the exact date has yet to be determined, there are some factors we do know:

- The draw down historically starts mid to late November, weather permitting, and takes about a week to complete.
- Washtenaw County will put out a press release and notify everyone subscribed to their email list 2 weeks before the draw down begins.
- [Flook Dam on Portage Lake list.](#)



Native Plant of the Season

Mary Beth Timmerman

Button Bush - The showy flowers of Button Bush fade to crimson seed heads in the Fall that give button bush its common name. These “buttons” persist into winter, turning a deep crimson providing winter interest to your landscape. In addition to its attractiveness to butterflies, button bush also serves as a host plant for some of our largest and showiest moths. As one of the few shrubs that blooms in midsummer, and one that can tolerate shade, wet conditions, and even occasional flooding – you’d be hard pressed to find a more valuable or versatile native shrub. This shrub also exhibits remarkable fall color, with deep reds and yellows. Given the showy blooms, fall color, red “buttons”, and glossy green leaves – button bush is truly a 4-season shrub.



The PBWOA Board of Directors:

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



HRCOLA

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2024 - Year in Review

Dave Wilutis

Many promising changes occurred in 2024, both with our lake association and local/state ordinances and reports. We hope these help lead to a healthier Chain of Lakes. Here is a review:

- To be more inclusive with lake residents from Zukey to Little Portage, and to encourage more participation along the entire chain, members voted to change our name to Huron River Chain of Lakes Association (HRCOLA). Our membership and board activity extends to all lakes in the chain and now our name change will reflect the larger population.
- The HRCOLA hired a professional web developer to consult, design and build our new website. It is easier to navigate, and easier to update with current events and news worthy information. The web address is <https://hrcola.org>. Please check in often for current information!
- The Michigan DNR issued a report on boats operating in wake-surfing mode or wake-boarding mode, during which boat speed, wave shapers and/or ballast are used to increase wave height. The report suggested these watercraft operate at least 500 feet from docks or shoreline and operate in water at least 15 ft deep. Following these rules will hopefully, reduce shoreline erosion as well as safety issues to others who use the lakes.
- Hamburg Township passed an ordinance restricting use of all fertilizer products. In part it states: "Application of any fertilizers shall not be permitted prior to May 1 and after November 15 to limit adverse impacts to wetland due to nutrient loading and accelerated cultural eutrophication. No fertilizer application of any type is permitted within 50 feet of the high-water level of a body of water or a river". This ordinance, as well as similar restrictions from Webster Twp. will over time reduce the higher nutrients in our lakes. These nutrients also feed the weeds and are major contributors to excessive weed levels we are experiencing in our chain of lakes.
- Preliminary design of the Flook Dam gate replacement and the downstream sidewall stabilization is now complete. Final bidding and construction dates should be completed soon. Check the Washtenaw County or HRCOLA website for updates.
- Lastly, a few tidbits.
- The weather was superb and attendance was above average for this year's July 4th fireworks display on Portage Lake.
- The lake management program for both the lower and upper group of lakes, continues to improve. The lake management program's yearly review to look at 2024 challenges and achievements for the lower lakes will take place in December. Washtenaw County will host this event and attendees are expected to include lake scientist, herbicide applicator, and harvester. HRCOLA will attend and provide constructive suggestions thanks to input from our members.
- Our board acquired a new member, Alan Rygiel from Whitewood Lake. We enjoyed board meetings in person this year as well as our Annual Meeting in May and August Pizza Party.

YOUR continued support of the Huron River Chain of Lakes Association is greatly appreciated

120 Hours on the Chain Summer of 2024

Alan Rygiel

My wife Krista and I are new homeowners on the chain of lakes, calling Whitewood Lake our home. We had spent many days boating with our children on the chain in prior years by using the DNR launch site. Now that our kids are older, we decided to move onto the chain, and I cannot tell you how much we have enjoyed this special summer – meeting new neighbors and having our children visit. Why didn't we do this sooner?

Once we were residents on the chain, we decided to sell our ski boat and purchase a pontoon. I can report after putting in so many hours with my family, friends and 2 dogs, that we all have big smiles! All I have to say is 'boat' and the dogs are on the pontoon and ready to go. We even purchased a special inflatable ladder and the dogs learned how easy it is to climb up and onto the pontoon.

We have spent countless hours on Little Portage. Portage, Baseline, Loon, Whitewood, Strawberry, Zukey and Gallagher, and even explored some of the canals. Each spot has its own personality, something that is special about that area and lake features. We have enjoyed pizza and ice cream as we cruise the river. We have taken in the beauty of the shoreline and talk about what the trees will look like in the Fall. We have met so many families while we have been anchored or touring and are impressed with the friendliness of everyone just relaxing and enjoying this fast-paced life.

We have enjoyed the spectacular wildlife from bald eagles to many types of ducks, all the turtles on the logs, and deer eating lily pads. How lucky are we to see the wetlands and wildlife as we ride along the chain. We are also grateful for everyone's effort who value the quality of the environment that surrounds this great chain. Recently I was asked to join the Board of the HRCOLA Association and am learning so much more about our waterways.

The Huron River and all the lakes are the responsibility of all of us in Michigan. I don't fertilize and neither do my neighbors. Everyone, please continue to chip in, help out and let us all be great stewards of this chain so our children and grandchildren will continue to have these waters to enjoy.



You can view the Newsletter on the Website

What to Expect from our Weed Management Program

Bonnie Swanson

Effective Weed Management Programs are complex and ours is administered under the supervision of Washtenaw County and Hamburg Township. Both programs require coordination and cooperation of three areas:

- EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes and Energy) State of Michigan – grants permits, issues restrictions or approval for specific chemicals
 - Lake Scientists – assess weed problems and recommend treatment based on the restrictions from the state
 - Chemical Applicators/Harvesters – carry out the recommendations from the scientists
1. Aquatic Plant Surveys – A survey is conducted by professional staff biologists. During the survey, invasive aquatic plant species such as Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and starry stonewort are mapped using a gps coordinate system. Field determinations for nuisance algal and native plant growth are also assessed during the survey. Considering the lake's ecology, as well as the recreational value, staff biologists map areas of concern to generate a treatment/harvest plan.
 2. Treatment/Harvest Planning – Once field investigations are completed, a treatment plan is developed individually for each lake. Depending on several factors such as species type, depth of water, flow, and location, herbicide application or mechanical harvesting is recommended to a licensed aquatic herbicide application company and/or a mechanical harvesting contractor. Herbicides recommended by biologists may change per treatment area depending on species present and surrounding environmental conditions. The type of herbicide is selected which will impose the least impact to the native plant community, as well as provide the best systemic control.
 3. Herbicide Notification(s) – Once the treatment plan is reviewed and accepted by the applicator, notification is sent to the City of Ann Arbor at least 7-days prior to the scheduled treatment. The applicator also will post signs along the shorelines within 100 ft of treatment areas, as required by Michigan law. These signs can be posted anywhere from 1-day to several minutes prior to treatment. Signs should be read by property owners to ensure they follow proper use restrictions for swimming and irrigation.
 4. Herbicide Application – Once all notifications are sent and signs have been posted, the applicator can then administer herbicide to the lake. This comes in several forms: surface spraying from the boat, sub-surface injection underneath the boat, and granular spreading are methods used depending on the type and dose for each individual herbicide. If you notice that the applicator is not spraying around your shoreline and you have a posted sign, then this means a liquid herbicide is being applied underneath the boat through drop hoses that can reach farther into the water column, or granular herbicide is being spread off the back of the boat.

5. Treatment Inspection – Once the herbicide is given an appropriate amount of time to work, staff biologists return to the lake to inspect the treatment areas. At this time, updated treatment plans are mapped and generated to accommodate any new growth. If treatment did not obtain the desired results, the staff biologist will coordinate with the herbicide application company to retreat the area.
6. Plant Response – Depending on the plants targeted and herbicide used, you may see results anywhere from a couple days to several weeks. Since it is an aquatic environment the plant growth generally remains floating upward longer than typical land applications. You will notice that plants start to turn brown, droop, and sometimes form algal growth on the leaves. All are signs of successful treatment. The aquatic plants will slowly decay and breakdown into sediment within the lake.

End of Year Lake Treatment Review

Jan Arps-Prundeanu

Several of your lake association board members will be attending the Lower Chain - End of Year Review of our Lake Treatments on December 6, 2024. This review is hosted by Washtenaw County, who manages the treatments for Little Portage, Portage, Baseline, Tamarack and Whitewood.

We will also be reaching out to the Hamburg Township Upper Chain Lake Review Team to assess their treatment results for Zukey, Strawberry, and Gallagher. These meetings provide an opportunity to review the results and develop strategies for next year's treatment plans. If you have any specific concerns, please share them with us at mail@HRCOLA.org so that we may present them to the teams. Please check our website: HRCOLA.org for more information and results of those meetings.

Our long-serving former PBWOA Board Member, Tom Hiller, passed away 9/12/2024. He dedicated many years of service to the board and was a great supporter of our lakes. We honor his love of the waters and his work to protect them.

How to Stay Connected

Jim Jensen

The HRCOLA tries to keep you informed about important issues regarding our lakes – only we need your help. We try to keep our mailings and emails at a minimum and only about important issues.

The best way for us to do this is to have your most current mailing address and email address. If any information has changed recently, please let us know.

When you receive communication about renewing your membership in the Spring, it would be very helpful if you would take a minute to recheck and let us know if your mailing address or email has changed. We review every card received to verify that the information in our membership system is accurate. Thank you for your help!!

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