



Huron River Chain Of Lakes Association

Serving the Lakes Community Since 1940

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

A Message from your President

Mark Teicher

On Saturday March 1 we held our first "Chain of Lakes Family Dinner." Just like many families, we don't get together often, but we do share many mutual problems and concerns. We had a heck of a good time and it was very nice to meet and talk with "cousins" from every lake, from Ore to Little Portage.

68 of us gathered for dinner at Zukey Lake Tavern and had great conversations about our key issues. Elected officials who attended and participated included State Senator Sue Shink, State Representative Jennifer Conlin, Livingston County Drain Commissioner Brian Jonckheere, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner Gretchen Driskell, Putnam Twp. Trustee Jim Jensen (also our Board Member) and Dexter Township Trustees Laura Sanders and Karen Nolte.

Of course, the Flook Dam, (condition, upcoming repairs, SAD and costs) was discussed. In addition to our elected officials, dam operator Art Stauch told us about how the dam does (and does not) work. Board Member from Whitewood Lake, Alan Rygiel, spoke about the dam, as well as HRCOLA participation with the Wayne State University Micro-Plastics Study. Board Secretary and Education Chair, Jan Arps-Prundeanu, led a discussion regarding natural shorelines and rain gardens. Board Member Bonnie Swanson discussed our lake water testing.

Ore Lake issues were presented by Ore Lake Resident Maureen Molley, and others, through pictures and conversation. Unfortunately, they have suffered severe flooding, invasive plants, and are working on their own SAD. Craig Kivi presented about his continuing conservation areas and seeking to get Legacy Land Conservancy to take it over along with his ongoing efforts to preserve shorelines. It was great to see everyone and share important information, hoping to add our "reunion" annually for members.

**You can view the
Newsletter on the Website**



Native Plant of the Season

Mary Beth Timmerman

Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*) has tall spikes of many tiny flowers and is a good vertical element to your shoreline garden. Its showy masses of tiny blooms attract butterflies and pollinators and does well in poor, dry soils that are typical of the crest of shorelines. This plant is often readily available at most nurseries.



Volunteer Opportunity

We are in need of a volunteer to perform water testing for the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program on Little Portage Lake. If you are interested, please call Bonnie Swanson at 734-878-9160.

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	
Angela Winnett	Strawberry Lake



HRCOLA

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www.HRCOLA.org

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Treasure Hunt

Dave Wilutis

Years ago, a very dear friend of mine who loves to snorkel and scuba dive shared that every year he would go north to Torch Lake and snorkel through the channels and waterways by the Dockside restaurant gathering trash and an occasional keepsake “booty”. It served two benefits: it satisfied his desire to be in the water snorkeling and it helped clean the lake bottom of much discarded trash left by party revelers and others.

I also enjoy snorkeling and his story triggered the need to do this dual-purpose activity on our own precious body of water. Annually, when the grandkids come for their summer visit, I recruit them to help search for the elusive “booty”. Our target location was an easy choice, the east side of Base Lake where the sand bar provides the perfect location for weekend revelers. Sadly, this also provides a resource of discarded trash left by some those revelers.

We set out by boat with snorkels, goggles and nylon mesh bags to store our newly gathered “treasure”. We return home at the end of our day with our catch and stories galore. It is a bittersweet annual event. I wish we could explore for just the wild life beneath the waterline and the occasional lost anchor, but the dual-purpose activity passed on to future generations is a good reminder of our commitment to leave our Chain of Lakes better than we found them.



Reporting a Concern about Weed Control

Bonnie Swanson

If you have a concern about any of the Upper Lakes - Little Portage, Portage, Base Line, Tamarack, or Whitewood, you can follow the process below to report your concern. Issues with Gallagher, Loon, Zukey, or Strawberry Lakes, please connect with Hamburg Township.

Go to: washtenaw.org/327/Chain-of-Lakes

1. Scroll down to the REPORT A CONCERN (Button)
2. Fill in your information regarding the concern
3. Submit

MICROPLASTICS

Tiny Pieces of Plastic Pollution

Alan Rygiel

Recently, an opportunity presented itself to your HRCOLA Board and we stepped up!

Starting this Spring, in cooperation with Wayne State University, several of your board members will be working side-by-side with research students to identify plastic pollution and its effects on our waters. We will collect samples at multiple sites to test soil for Microplastics on the Huron River Chain of Lakes. Samplings will be collected over several months 2025-2026 starting at Ore Lake and going to the Flook Dam.

The samples collected will be analyzed for types of Microplastics; size of samples found, potential harm to the environment, possible source of the plastics, etc. It is critical we analyze this data gleaned from these samples, as there could be dangers from consumption of fish, inhalation of air borne toxins, or problems from skin contact.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with this important project and learning more, please let us know by emailing us at mail@HRCOLA.org.

The Huron River and our Chain of Lakes are very popular recreational destinations for visitors and year-round residents. This research will help our team to work with State and Federal government agencies for a cleaner environment in the future.

Coming Soon: Rain Garden at Portage Launch Site

Jan Arps-Prundeanu

The HRCOLA education committee has been working on this for many months and the installation of a RAIN GARDEN is now scheduled for this Spring. The DNR has been very supportive of the project as they see the benefits of filtering the water that flows into our lakes. We hope you will check it out and come away with plans for creating your own rain garden!

Resources are available – on our website: HRCOLA.org

Donations to support the raingarden are welcome at

HRCOLA.org. Look for the DONATE button in the header.



Lower Huron River Chain of Lakes 2024 Review of Lake Treatments

Jan Arps-Prundeanu

The year- end review of the lake treatments on the Lower lakes was held 12/6/2024 with three HRCOLA board members present (Wilutis, Swanson & Arps-Prundeanu). Both Paul Hausler and Jared Laughlin attended from Progressive Companies (formerly Progressive AE) with Lauren Koloski, Theo Eggermont and Eric Mayo representing Washtenaw County.

The entire Annual Report for the Lower Lakes from Progressive can be found here: www.washtenaw.org/2809/Chain-of-Lakes-Archive

In general, most were pleased with the project results: Eurasian water milfoil has been on a general downward trend since 2019. Flowering rush also showed significant reductions from 2023. Starry stonewort (in Tamarack and Whitewood) has decreased significantly since 2019 and the change in treatment strategy (i.e. harvesting first then treating) resulted in considerable reductions in 2024. (It should be noted that when the board learned from Putnam Township's Highland Lake experience with that strategy, HRCOLA Board member Bonnie Swanson pressed for it to be attempted in Tamarack and the results were significant reductions.)

The plan for 2025 is to once again harvest the stary stonewort first and coordinate the treatment timing with the seven day notice requirement to Ann Arbor. Jared also hopes to coordinate all treatments with harvesting to increase its effectiveness. The concern of many that the harvested weeds wash up on the shorelines was once again an issue for some. Jared indicated that it is difficult to prevent and can be quite variable around the lakes. There was a lot of wild celery from propellers and geese well after harvesting occurred this past fall. Huron Lakes Weed Control (the contract harvester) provides collection of weeds that residents put on the end of their docks within a given time frame which is more than most harvesters provide. Huron Lakes Weed Control is open to contracting privately with those desiring a higher level of service, such as shore front clean up.

The HRCOLA board has been challenging the timing of treatments over the years and researched the "existence" of the Cisco fish in our waters, which has precluded treatments prior to June 1st (except in the canals). Fish surveys have not detected the Cisco fish in our waters for more than 45 years. It is a cold-water fish and possible causes for its extinction include predation by Northern Pike and deteriorating water quality – very little oxygen, AND increasingly warmer waters. Progressive is hopeful that given the accepted status of the Cisco fish that treatments may start earlier in 2025.

An earlier treatment of curly leaf pondweed would have the possible positive effect of reducing the biomass that can result in increased algal blooms. If milfoil is detected early (if we once again have a warm spring) there is potential that it could also be treated earlier than June 1st.

Chloride levels in the lakes most connected to the Huron River continue to be of concern as it can affect the native plants, which have seen a slight decline. One of the goals of the lake

management program is to maintain native plant diversity. Some possible sources of chloride include road salts, sidewalk salts, and improper discharge of water softener into the lakes.

The program is also researching the possible use of "nutrient deactivator" called PhosLock which can reduce phosphorous levels in the sediment. They are looking at using this in Tamarack and Little Portage, given their high phosphorous levels.

You may have already noticed the reduction in your assessment on your December taxes. Washtenaw County special assessment was reduced to 75% as costs have been lower than required to run the project in recent years.

The Upper Huron River Chain of Lakes (Strawberry, Gallagher, Loon, and Zukey) review will be held sometime later this Spring.

Flood Dam Repairs

Jan Arps-Prundeanu

A public meeting was held 02/06/26 at the Hamburg Township Hall to review the special assessment property lists & corresponding costs for Portage, Base Line, Little Portage, Tamarack and Whitewood Lakes. The presentation was made by Kyle O-Meara, attorney for Washtenaw County Water Resources.

- Cost of repairs - \$ 2,107,950 (once approved by Livingston and Washtenaw County Commissioners in March, the interest rate will be determined. Anticipated around 5%)
- Assessments can be paid in full to avoid interest charges
- Washtenaw County did apply for the limited State grant funding available for Dams, but did not receive any award. (Repairs are not often funded thru state grants.)
- Many individuals questioned why the upper lakes were not included when the assessment district was established. Only Portage and Base Line Lakes have established court ordered lake levels, established by Circuit Court (1956)
- For more information about Lake Levels, please see your Fall 2024 Michigan Riparian article by Attorney Clifford Bloom. The Michigan Riparian is received by members.

Boater Safety Class

Jan Arps-Prundeanu

Saturday, April 26, 2025

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 pm

Portage Yacht Club, 8930 Dexter-Pinckney Road

Registration for this class is now open at:

<https://michigan.storefront.kalkomey.com/em/events/8430>

Boater safety is an investment in safer waters for all of us. HRCOLA is sponsoring this class offered by the Washtenaw County Sheriff Marine Division. Anyone born after 7-1-1996 MUST be certified to legally operate a boat on Michigan waters. This one-day course meets that requirement. There is no registration fee and lunch will be provided at PWOA expense.

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