



WATERSHED NEWS

Letter from the President

Once again the year has come and gone much too quickly and seeing the lake frozen over lets us know that winter will have us firmly in her grip for the next several months.

I am very excited to share with you some news we received this fall. In last year's newsletter, we let you know we had applied for a SAW grant from the DNR, through the conservation district, to update the watershed master plan. As we reported at the annual meeting, we did not receive the grant in 2014. I am very happy to report that we did receive a grant for 2015! The amount of the grant is approximately \$110,000. Exactly what is this grant is and what it does for us is detailed in an article in the newsletter, so please read about it. Suffice to say here that this will allow us to get a much better understanding of the health of our watershed and what items need to be done for further protection.

Another piece of good news coming this fall was the passing of the millage for the Benzie Conservation District. Thank you to all of the Benzie County voters that supported this millage renewal. The conservation district has been a very important partner in the testing we have been doing on our lake and their continued operation is, I feel, very important to all of us.

We are now completing our 4th year as an organization and with that my time as your president must come to an end. Our bylaws state that a person can only hold an office for two 2-year terms. That means that all of the current officers, myself, Bill Mick our treasurer, and Mollie Smith our secretary, cannot run for office again. New officers will need to be elected at our annual meeting in June. Please consider running for an office. There really is not a lot of time commitment, and those of us who have been involved in all of the activities will be here to assist. If you are interested in running, please contact one of the officers to let them know.

Sincerely,
Bill Henning
Bill Henning

UHLA Officers:

President: *Bill Henning* • **Vice President:** *TBD*

Treasurer: *Bill Mick* • **Secretary:** *Mollie Smith*

In This Issue

SAW Grant

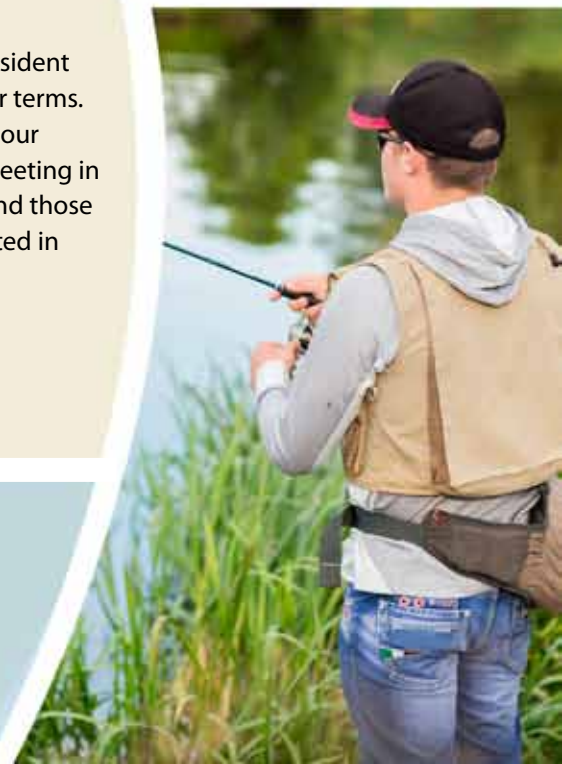
Save the Date

2014 Water Quality

2014 Secchi Readings

Invasive Species Watch

Working Together



SAW Grant – What is it and what it means for us

The SAW (Storm water, Asset management, Wastewater) grant is a program run by the Michigan DEQ. It provides funds for a variety of uses, one of them being the creation of watershed management plans. The Benzie Conservation district applied for a grant to update the existing Herring Lakes Watershed Master plan to make it compliant with section 319 of the federal clean water act (more on why that is important shortly). The application for the grant was done through the conservation district because the application had to come from a unit of government.

While we were not awarded a grant in the first funding cycle early in the spring of 2014, the DEQ did receive additional funding for 2015 and we received a grant in this second round of funding. The total grant is for \$109,970. The conservation district will be working with two engineering companies, Abonmarche and Grobbel Environmental, to complete the management plan. The grant is for a period of 30 months, but it is hoped the management plan will be completed within two years.

The purpose of the management plan is to identify issues pertaining to water quality in the watershed and create plans for rectifying/addressing these issues. With the involvement of these engineering firms we will be getting: 1) Much more data on nutrient loading and other factors affecting the health of our watershed than we have been able to collect so far. 2) Expertise on evaluating the data to produce action plans for addressing problem areas. During the coming year you should be seeing activity related to the grant on two fronts. The first will be education and outreach meetings. Community awareness and involvement are important parts to establishing a master plan so a series of meetings will be scheduled in 2015 to address this. The second area will be increased sampling and data collection. It is hoped that we will be able to assist the engineering companies in this work so stay tuned for requests for volunteers.

As I mentioned earlier, the product we hope to receive with the help of this grant money is a section 319 compliant watershed master plan. The reason it is important to be 319 compliant is in getting funding to actually carry out an action plan that is identified in the master plan. There is money available through many different sources to address issues with water quality, but most of them require that the issue be identified in a 319 compliant master plan before they would consider funding the operation. As an example, lets say that one issue identified in our lake was weed density being too great and that mechanical harvesting of the weeds to reduce the density was recommended (this is purely hypothetical and we are not suggesting this is an issue). Mechanical harvesting is very expensive and is not something we could easily undertake as an association. However, if it is identified as an action item in a section 319 compliant master plan, there are grants for which we could apply to pay for the operation.

It is very exciting we have this opportunity to get a high quality master plan for the lakes. Stay tuned for more information on this as the year progresses.



Save | JUNE |
THE DATE | 13 |
2015 |

The annual meeting will be held on June 13th at 10:00 A.M. at the Blaine Christian Church. We will be electing officers at this meeting so please make every effort to attend.

Water Quality in the Lake and Watershed

We continued our water quality monitoring this year, collecting the same data we have for the past 4 years, E-coli, phosphorous, nitrate, and Secchi disk readings. (See the charts below for actual data obtained). Once again, we have, for the most part, very good news on this front. Samples taken from the lake did not show any problem with E-coli levels, indicating the lake water is safe for any type of activity. There was a high level of E-coli in the stream just before it enters the lake in our June sample. This sample was taken just after a period of heavy rain (remember how wet things were early in the summer) and the higher than normal level may have been due to this increased runoff. Both the phosphorous and nitrate data indicate the loads of these nutrients in the lake are not at levels that would promote uncontrolled plant growth. You may also notice the numbers for E-coli at the Raymond road creek are also high for both the early summer and late summer samples. While these numbers are indeed high, the amount of flow in this stream is very low and does not contribute much to the total loading into the lake.



2014 Water Sampling Results

Sampling Site Date	E-coli c.f.u.		Phosphorous ppb		Nitrate mg/L	
	6/5/14	8/26/14	6/5/14	8/26/14	6/5/14	8/26/14
Herring Creek at Gorivan Road	770	185	30	10	1.52	0.35
Herring Creek at M-22	61	82	<10	10	0.34	0.83
Tributary at Swamp Road N.	82	61	10	<10	0.83	0.34
Tributary at Raymond Road	185	770	10	30	0.35	1.52
Tributary at Swamp Road S.	38	2	<10	<10	2.07	0.18
100 Yds. offshore of inlet	56	83	<10	10	0.32	0.33
Off shore of Evergreen Shores	47	5	<10	<10	0.38	0.34
South shore of Lake	20	2	<10	<10	0.36	0.19
Deep Basin of Lake	40	6	<10	<10	0.3	0.2

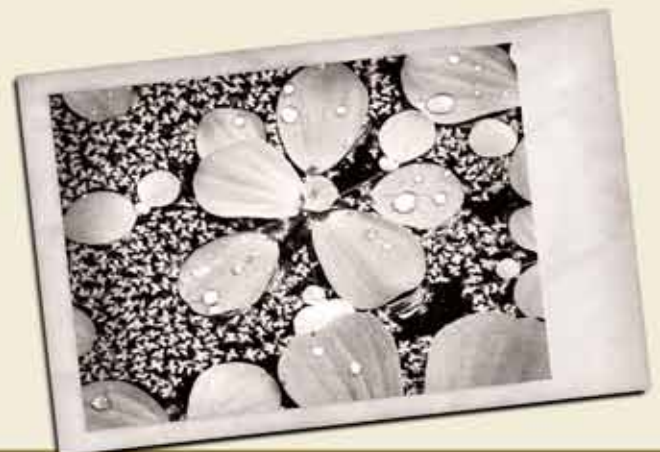
2014 Secchi Disk Readings

Secchi disk readings were also taken throughout the summer to quantify the clarity of the water in the lake. The numbers matched very closely with what was observed in 2013, with the algae growth beginning later in the year, undoubtedly due to the much cooler weather. This is a very easy measurement to take and Bill Henning would love to have some help in collecting the data. If you are interested in helping, please let Bill know.

Date	5/12	5/25	6/5	6/28	7/12	7/29	8/8	8/27	9/13	9/25
Feet	8	15	11	11	9.5	8	6	5.5	7.5	8.5

Invasive Species Watch

Unfortunately, this year we did not accomplish the survey of the lake for invasive plant species. It is certainly hoped this will only be a one-year lapse in collecting this data.





Working Together

An area of concern for the officers has been a slow but steady decline in the number of dues paying members of our association. This year we only have 30 member families in the association. This is down from 45 we had 3 years ago. If you would be interested in leading or serving on a committee to look into what can be done to increase our membership, please contact one of the officers.

