

TLA Quarterly

JUNE 2008

President's Letter

Summer is finally here and we have a birth announcement! New baby loons on Lake Bellaire, two in the north arm and two in the south bay. Please be careful when boating in those areas. Sadly, Clam Lake's loons lost their eggs to either predators or lake wash. No nests are reported on Torch.

Our TLA/GRNA golf tourney at Cedar River Golf Course was a huge success with 100 golfers and 140 dinner guests. Great sponsors and wonderful prizes made it a memorable day. Alan Hickman was our chairman. He did a great job and thinks we should net at least as much as last year which was a record. The proceeds help to support our education events.

Speaking of education, we'll have held our first event, "Your Northern Home & Garden" at the Alden Depot, by the time you receive this newsletter. The second event, "In the Drink V", is August 20th at DeWitt Marine from 4-6 p.m. It will feature a pontoon cruise and focus on water quality and boating. Please mark your calendars and join us.

Also in the education department, TLA will be participating in the Alden "Summers Evening Strolls" on July 24 and August 14 from 7-9 p.m. We'll have a display set up with information about all the good things we're doing to monitor and protect our lakes and streams.

Our TLA annual meeting and dinner is July 16 from 5-8 p.m. at Shanty Creek Resorts. There will be live entertainment and a silent auction with some great things to bid on. Make your reservations by July 1st with Lois Kollin, 231-533-7735. If you can't make the dinner, you may come to the business meeting prior at no charge.

The shoreline survey is underway on Lake Bellaire. Results from last year's survey of Torch Lake are now available. There are some very important lake issues that we all need to understand and let our voices be heard. Please get involved; we value your opinions and participation.

Have a wonderful summer--we'll see you on our beautiful lakes.

Best regards,
Bob Bagley



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The Mission of the Three Lakes Association is to provide leadership to preserve, protect, and improve the environmental quality of the chain of lakes watershed for all generations.



THREE LAKES ASSOCIATION

Founded 1966

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- Becky Norris, Treasurer
- Dorothy Clore, Secretary
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- George Bushnell, Public Relations
- Alan Hickman, Membership
- Becky Norris, Finance
- Dorothy Clore, Education

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the Three Lakes Association**

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E.COLI Sampling

Last year TLA carried out E-coli sampling on seventeen of the major tributaries in our Three Lakes Region and presented the results in the Oct. 2007 TLA Newsletter. In general, the E-coli levels were low in all of our streams but the variation was large. These levels depend on the water temperature, the time of year and rainfall level, and many other factors. The lowest levels of 10-50 colonies per 100 ml sample occurred in Cold, Finch, Shanty, and upper Cedar Rivers. Higher levels of 50-300 occurred on Meggison, Spencer, Eastport, Wilkinson Creeks, and a few levels in the 300-1,500 range occurred in some smaller west Torch Lake Drive streams. A geometric mean below 300 on 3 samples is considered to be safe for beach activity (TLA typically averaged two samples on each Creek).

These levels were well below the E-coli levels seen in the Mitchell Creek watershed in Milton Township. This creek is not in the Three Lakes watershed but the high levels there have drawn considerable attention from property owners in that area. The cause of the high E-coli levels is not known but many residents suspect that the human seepage used for fertilizer on the farms in the area may be responsible. Milton Township has formed a subcommittee to continue testing on Mitchell Creek and to find and eliminate the cause of these unhealthy levels.

While TLA has not been directly involved in this controversy, we are aware that a number of our tributary watersheds have similar human seepage operations. So this year we are working with TLPA to look at the E-coli levels in the Elk River watershed that have a human seepage operations and compare them with the ones we have taken already. In fact, some of the stream watersheds we have sampled already have human seepage disposal.

This year we plan to sample twice during the summer, once in late June during a rainy period and once toward the end of August when the stream flow is lower. As we did last year the sampling always done in pairs. That is we take two samples for each stream. As before, we will put the results in the fall TLA Newsletter.

TLA ANNUAL MEETING

TLA's Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, 5 PM to 8 PM on July 16, 2008 at Shanty Creek Resort, Lakeview Hotel, Bellaire Ballroom. Reservations can be made by mailing a check payable to the Three Lakes Association for \$21 per person to Lois Kollin, 7081 Cottage Drive, Bellaire, MI 49615. The reservation deadline is July 1. There will be appetizers and a meal choice of grilled top sirloin with ratatoulli and mashed potatoes or tilapia Florentine with fresh spinach and wild rice. There will be a silent auction and musical entertainment by Shawn and Patrick Ryan. For additional information, please call Loise Kollin at 231-377-7733.

Guests are welcome and those that my not wish to join in the meal may still attend and participate in the TLA business meeting and election of officers. Naturopoly games may be purchased for \$32 at the Annual Meeting too.

High School Internship Project

Three Lakes Association (TLA) hosted an orientation session June 10 in the USDA building in Bellaire to begin its 2008 high school student internship program: a shoreline survey of Lake Bellaire. This orientation featured a training session run by Peg Comfort of White Pines Associates. This is the sixth year that area high schools, Bellaire, Central Lake, and Elk Rapids have participated in a TLA internship program studying water quality on Torch Lake, Clam Lake, and Lake Bellaire. This summer these students and TLA volunteers will carry out a shoreline survey similar to one done on Torch Lake last year by Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center and White Pines Associate with cooperation from TLA and Torch Lake Protection Alliance. The survey will document the extent of shoreline buffer vegetation around the lake periphery, including photos, maps, and an evaluation of each lake parcel. The final result will be a report, written by the students, which summarizes the condition of the shoreline and areas of concern. No individual property will be identified in the summary report. This survey will serve as a baseline to compare with other lakes and with future changes in Lake Bellaire. Several riparians from Intermediate Lake also attended the orientation with thoughts of doing a similar survey on their lake with the participation of the Intermediate Lake Association. The Torch Lake Shoreline Survey can be found on www.3lakes.com.

June 19 the student interns met for the first time at Norb Kollin's house to start the survey of Lake Bellaire. This survey involves both

a road and lake portion. The road part helps connect addresses with parcels identified from the shore. The resulting database will eventually consist of a collection of survey data and photos tied to each tax parcel around the lake. If you see someone in a pontoon boat examining your cottage please don't get upset. Wave the boat



TLA High School Internship Shoreline Survey of Lake Bellaire from Bob Kollin's pontoon boat. Norb Kollin, Bob Kollin, Braden Ackerman, and Peg Comfort

in and let them explain what they are doing. The results of the survey will be available in the fall.

Peg Comfort helped get the survey off to a good start by joining in our first excursion, and Dean Branson coordinated the activities. Braden Ackerman of Elk Rapids High School, Wilhelmina Witt of Central Lake High School, and Billy Bohannon of Bellaire High School are our three interns this year.

IN THE DRINK V – AUGUST JOINT TLA/TLPA/GRNA EDUCATIONAL EVENT

Don't miss this summer's last wine and cheese educational reception hosted by the Grass River Natural Area, Three Lakes Association, and Torch Lake Protection Alliance. On Wednesday, August 20 from 4 to 6 PM In the Drink will take place at DeWitt's Marina. This is the fifth annual Chain-of-Lakes Water Report Card. Discover what local organizations are doing to safeguard our waters, enjoy wine and cheese, and a pontoon cruise. Take home a boat spill clean-up kit. The event is free but we encourage pre-registration at 231-533-8314.

Star Buoys

Sheriff Terry Johnson has recently reaffirmed the commitment of the Antrim County Marine Patrol to enforce Star Buoy regulations. Since introduced to our lakes by TLA about 1990, these buoys have been used by residents to mark off swimming areas and warn boats to slow down in areas immediately adjacent to these markers. They generally warn boaters to be at a no-wake speed within 100 ft. the buoy.

So what are the rules that govern the placement of Star Buoys?

- I. There can be no more than one Star Buoy per parcel or residence.
- II. Star Buoys can be placed no more than 100 ft. from the shoreline, dock, raft, or other moored device.

In all areas watercraft must follow the Marine Safety Act of 1967 and the Personal Watercraft Act of 1998 but are further restricted in speed near Star Buoys. Violations should be reported to Antrim County 231-533-862 or Kalkaska County 231-258-3350. The sheriff will enforce these buoy regulations both against boaters but asks that riparians also follow the rules about number per residence and distance from docks and buoys.

Star Buoys can be purchased from Torch River (Ace) Hardware for \$129.99



Planting with No Phosphate Fertilizers

Excess weeds and algae along the shore are encouraged by nutrient-overload – frequently due to human actions and especially by the phosphorus in lawn fertilizers, which is usually unneeded in this region. People living on or near lakes and streams will be pleased to know where to get zero-phosphorus fertilizers

BUSINESS	ADDRESS	PHONE
ATWOOD HARDWARE	10179 N. US-31 Hwy., Atwood	231-599-2551
CYMAN GARDENS	2197 S. M-88 Hwy., Bellaire	231-533-8960
EASTPORT MARKET	5431 N. US-31 Hwy., Eastport	231-599-2507
ELLSWORTH CO-OP	6509 Center St., Ellsworth	231-588-2300
GIL-ROYS HARDWARE	105 Bridge St., Elk Rapids	231-264-8457
GREEN LEAF NURSERY	7916 Alden Hwy., Bellaire	231-331-4121
PINE HILL NURSERY	886 N. US-31 Hwy., Torch Lake Village	231-599-2824
L&R TRUE VALUE	101 S. Bridge St., Bellaire	231-533-6906
MCCLEAN'S HARDWARE	109 Oak St., Kalkaska	231-258-9136
TORCH RIVER ACE HARDWARE	Torch River Bridge, Rapid City	231-332-4600

Noise gun update

The Michigan DNR Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities states that the muffler or exhaust system of a boat “must prevent noise levels in excess of 90 dB (decibels) at idle from 3 feet or 75 dB from on shore.” However, there is apparently no enforcement mechanism. In 1997 TLA Board Member Jack Norris suggested an innovative concept for measuring sound levels from a remote location, called a “noise gun.” Subsequently Michigan Lakes and Streams Association sponsored the development of a practical device. Michigan State University Mechanical Engineering Professor Clark Radcliffe built an experimental prototype of this noise gun which was tested and calibrated in 2005 in collaboration with TLA, TLPA, and Antrim County Marine Patrol on Torch Lake. A report of these tests was written: Development and Validation of an Instrument to Measure Boat Noise by Prof. Radcliffe.

Practical use of this noise gun by the Antrim County Sheriff's Department has been delayed by the fact that there is no state law

that allows police to write enforceable tickets based on sound level measurements from this noise gun. Despite the combined efforts of TLA, TLPA, and ML&S this situation has not changed in the last few years.

So, how should we move forward? First, since there is no production model of this device available for purchase, TLA and TLPA are requesting cost quotes from candidate manufacturers for a few noise guns. We intend to look for sources of funding – possibly a grant. Once a noise gun is in hand, we propose to use it for educational campaigns, with particular attention to those few excessively noisy boats. We also propose to lend the noise gun to the Antrim County Marine Patrol for their use to find out about the operational and practical problems associated with its day-to-day use. And at the same time we are exploring ways to upgrade the legal status of tickets issued by police to violators of State noise laws.

Your comments on this course of action are welcome. Please let us know your thoughts.

Good News, state to pass water withdrawal

Three Lakes Association (TLA) has been concerned about the potential for abusive water withdrawals from groundwater in the State, especially if the withdrawals are from those aquifers that may affect the Elk River Chain-of-Lakes watershed. This 500-square mile watershed is mainly in Antrim County. On June 23rd, Michigan lawmakers arrived at a bipartisan compromise that sets the stage for passage of a package of identically worded bills in the House and Senate to regulate withdrawal of groundwater within the State.

By passing this legislation...

- Michigan will become the 7th state to approve the eight-state Great Lakes Compact against large-scale water diversions; only Pennsylvania remains.
- The public can be assured that users will utilize conservation principles to prevent excessive harm to aquatic resources by taking too much water.
- The public is allowed input into decisions about large-scale water uses that might impact local ecosystems, i.e. greater than 1,000,000 gallons per day.
- Agricultural, municipal, and industrial users of groundwater, including water bottling operations can easily evaluate whether a proposed increased water withdrawals may harm water resources by using a unique computer-assisted Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool that is customized to Michigan watersheds.

TLA has strongly supported the passage of a package of bills that would provide adequate protection of groundwater while still enabling reasonable withdrawals for agriculture, municipal, and industrial purposes. In response to TLA's first website ALERT on

this topic, sent on March 18, 2008, and the second ALERT sent on June 11th, several subscribers communicated directly with their legislators regarding their support for the package of House Bills and their opposition to the Senate Bills. The comments you sent to your legislators may have helped forge the blending of the two packages of legislation. More than 120 e-mail address subscribers received these TLA ALERT messages. To subscribe, please enroll by submitting your e-mail address on TLA's website: www.3lakes.com. Is it time to thank our legislators for protecting Michigan's water resources?

TLA wanted to limit the impact of water withdrawal on thriving fish populations in cold rivers and streams to less than 1%. The final blended version of the House and Senate versions indicate that up to 3% reduction in fish thriving was the compromise, which may be better than not passing any water withdrawal regulations.

According to Dr. Grenetta Thomassey, one of the leading advocates for the House package of bills, on behalf of the Tip of the Mitt and the Great Michigan, Great Lakes Coalition, "Yesterday, not a drop of Michigan's precious water was adequately protected from withdrawal or diversions. With these laws, 75 percent of stream flows are safe from being siphoned away, and the remainder are subject to rules ensuring availability to business, industry, and farmers, for reasonable use." TLA relies on Tip of the Mitt for advice regarding proposed changes in public policy in Lansing, especially the protection of water.

Your Northern home and garden

The first Joint GRNA/TLA/TLPA Educational Event Your Northern Home and Garden was held June 25 at 4 PM at the Alden Depot under a warm sunny sky. Roberta Dow, Water Quality Educator of the MSU Extension Service described the Home*A*Syst program that helps a homeowner evaluate his or her property for pollution and health risks and passed out some literature to help them remember. Local nurseries: Barker Creek, Cyman Gardens, Greenleaf, and Pine Hill, contributed designs for greenbelt gardens that help keep our lake waters healthy and provide attractive buffers between cottages and the shore. Over 100 guests participated in the event and were able to speak with experts on greenbelts. The Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center presented the results of last summer's lakeshore survey on Torch Lake. In addition to the MSU Extension Service, Antrim County Soil Conservation Service and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council contributed to the show.

Roberta Dow, Water Quality Educator for the MSU Extension Service, gives a presentation on how to evaluate your home pollution free and healthy.



Joint GRNA/TLA golf outing

The fifth annual Golf tourney was held on June 22 at Cedar River Golf course. One-hundred golfers and twenty-five teams competed for prizes in three divisions; men's women's and co-ed. The proceeds of the tournament are divided equally between Grass River Natural Area and Three Lakes Associations. This event has brought in approximately \$6,500 per organization to be used for various educational activities. Major sponsors of the event were Shanty Creek Resorts, Alden State Bank, and DeWitt Marine. At least 100 local businesses provided sponsorships for tees and greens, raffle prizes, and silent auction. The dinner was attended by 140 guests and the awards were given out at that time.



Joint GRNA/TLA Golf Outing participants
Al Gibbs, Chris Clore, Ray Ludwa, Bob Clore.

The three winning teams were:

Women: Rosa Cude, Betty Bea Washburn, Linda Moreen, Linda Salo

Men: Mike Kneale, Gary DuBois, Mike Moreen, Ken Salo.

Mixed: Art McClellan, Rita McClellan, Bill North, Rita North.

Membership Drive

A zone directors meeting was held June 9 to organize a canvassing campaign to help reach our goal of 550 members for 2008. Zone directors will begin door-to-door canvassing by July 1 and continue through the summer. This year's effort will be focused on Torch Lake. A letter was sent to all Torch Lake riparians in May. To date there are 13 new members and 8 renewals as a result. The canvassing teams will now personally contact those who did not respond to the letter. Our hope is to increase the percentage of representation of Torch Lake riparians.

Please check to see that your 2008 dues are up to date. Your dues are an important part of enabling TLA to carry out its work for you and the watershed.

New members:

Blessed, William	Jones Heyl, Patty
Bokerman, Gary and Linda	Knight, Mark
Brown, Nancy and Bruce	Lazar, Paul
Businski, Robert and Marjorie	McCoy, Nancy and Mike
Cowell, Elva	McFarland, Craig
Egger, Werner	Nightengale, Chris and Ron
Fenn, William and Glynis	Podurgiel, Nancy
Gorlin, Robert	Rafferty, Earl and Lorraine
Gunn, Sharon	Rossi, Denise
Hamaty, John	Ruggles, Constance
Hardy, Elizabeth	Stromberg, Jennifer
Harris, James	Williams, James
Hein, Nick and Diana	Williams, R. Jaminson
Jacob, Barney	Whittlesey, Ted
Johnstone, Jim	

Renewed from before 2006:

Fellows, James	Reed, William
Forgrave, Dorothy	Saul, Richard and Jane
Johnston, Agenta	Schoenberg, Maurice
Lesperance, Lewis	Sheehan, Jean
Plomer, Edward	Stimpson, Mary Ann

Torch Lake shoreline survey

The Torch Lake Shoreline Survey is done!! Many thanks to White Pines Associates', Peg Comfort and the Grand Traverse Watershed Center, especially Sarah U'Ren for completing this massive undertaking involving some 20 volunteers from TLA and TLPA. The actual survey was done last summer and fall by filling out a survey for each property on the lake, all 1,752 of them, and taking photos of each residence. This material was entered into a spreadsheet and boiled down to a set of charts and graphs showing how much of the shoreline is natural, disturbed, or landscaped. Areas of erosion concern have been tabulated. Funding for this activity was provided by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

From the perspective of clean water and a healthy marine environment for our fishery, we have long advocated shoreline buffer vegetation of plants, shrubs, and trees that extend away from the water line. These buffers can provide an esthetic and ecologically healthy way of buffering lake waters from land activities. Many attractive and efficient buffers have been designed by local landscapers, nurseries, and watershed organizations. We encourage all lake shore and near-lake shore property owners to consider some of these ideas.

Some of the general results are as follows:

86% of the Torch Lake shoreline is developed

32% of the greenbelt buffer is in very good to excellent condition

44% is in poor to very poor condition.

7% of the shoreline has some serious erosion problems.

No individual properties are identified in the final report. However, if you want to know the results of your own property, please contact Sarah U'Ren, Program Director for the Watershed Center at 231-935-1514 ext. 2. And if you would like a consultation about improvements suited to your property, call John Nelson, Baykeeper for the Watershed Center at 231-935-1514 ext. 3.

Please check out the Torch Lake Shoreline Survey on the Three Lakes website www.3lakes.com or the Watershed Center website www.gtby.org.

Cement kiln dust leachate: regional stakeholders group

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is facilitating the formation of a Regional Stakeholders Group to help seek solutions to the Bay Harbor cement kiln dust leachate problem through a unique non-adversarial, consensus-seeking process. Currently, leachate created from rain and ground water running through piles of cement kiln dust heads towards Little Traverse Bay. Collection lines have been installed along the shoreline in front of Bay Harbor properties and East Park to prevent the majority of leachate from entering Bay. Some of the captured leachate is being trucked to Traverse City for treatment in a wastewater treatment plant and some is disposed of in a deep well near Johannesburg in Otsego County.

This Group envisions becoming an effective communications channel between multiple regional community stakeholder entities and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). CMS Energy, the organization directly involved in the remediation of the site contamination, has elected to not participate in this Regional Stakeholders Group at this time. The first meeting of this group is schedule for August 28th. The time and place of this meeting are being determined.

TLA's Board has expressed interest in participating in this new group, in part because of TLA's involvement in a similar non-adversarial group of stakeholders (ACUTE) that helped to successfully address the trichloroethylene (TCE) plume problem migrating from Mancelona toward Cedar River and Shanty Creek Resort.

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council has been working on the Bay Harbor leachate issue for about four years and seems like the most appropriate organization to spearhead this effort. In addition to representatives from the US EPA and DEQ, the anticipated major stakeholder entities may include representatives from the Regional Health Department, Boards of Commissioners from Emmet, Antrim, and Charlevoix Counties, Michigan Environmental Council, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, property owners, and area lake & watershed organizations.

It is hoped that this Group might catalyze new ideas for addressing issues associated with the leachate problem, including issues raised by the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed as part of their opposition to the proposed Alba leachate injection well.



membership counts!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Three Lakes Association is a 501(c)(3) corporation. Your dues and other contributions are tax deductible. Gifts, memorials, and bequests can also be made to the Three Lakes watershed Conservation Foundation administered by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Michigan residents receive a 50% state tax credit for contributions to this fund. Call for further information.

* * * * *

To join Three Lakes Association please return this form with your check to:

**THREE LAKES ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 689
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THREE LAKES
ASSOCIATION

