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Contact us at

P.O. Box 689

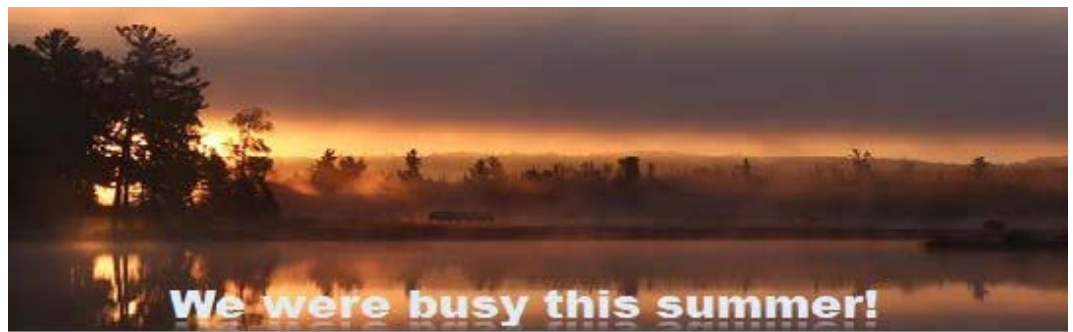
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Great Catch Fish Photo Contest

We got some great shots for our Annual Great Catch Fish Photo Contest. Winners were awarded gift cards and a photo certificate. We will be doing it again in 2025!



Members, donors, and volunteers provide the financial support, enthusiasm and hands-on labor which make the work of Three Lakes Association possible.

Golden Brown Algae (GBA)



TLA's collaboration with Dr. Jan Stevenson to find out why GBA has increased in abundance in Torch Lake continued this year. Shallow water samples were collected at six sites around the lake in May, June and August as part of the twenty-site survey project. Dr. Stevenson also sampled six deep water sites in May and August. The work is coordinated with a USGS study sponsored by Torch Lake Protection Alliance. In

combination, these studies hope to identify if human activities have increased the abundance of GBA. Dr. Stevenson completed his TLA sponsored experiments in Torch Lake to investigate the impact nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen have on GBA development. Specialized chemical analysis will investigate whether phosphorus availability reduces calcium accumulation in the mats of GBA which may make them more durable and help the algae's natural color become so noticeable.

GBA studies are partially funded by the Dole Family Foundation.



Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM)

The TLA/TLPA Invasive Plant Team conducted its annual observations at 15 sites in mid-July with the help of an underwater camera. Light to modest growth at previously treated locations confirmed the effectiveness of our control strategies. We have now demonstrated hand pulling removal techniques using volunteer scuba divers.



Summer Internship Program

Our internship program is offered to all area high schools. This year students from the Bellaire and Kalkaska High Schools, with the help of volunteers, spent Thursday mornings in June and July collecting invasive mussel samples in Clam Lake, Grass River and Lake Bellaire. Zebra mussels were found to be present in each waterbody but only two small Quagga mussels were identified, both in Lake Bellaire. Zebra mussels were found most abundant at a depth of around forty feet. Project reports and details can be found at 3lakes.com.

The TLA internship program is partially funded by the Gerrit Lee Wierda Memorial Internship Fund and a grant from the Dole Family Foundation.



Science Education Outreach Program (SEOP)

SEOP cultivates stewardship of the environment in young people who are the next generation that will care for our environment. This year we awarded nearly \$7,000 in grants to 13 teachers in our local school districts for hands-on activities and field trips. SEOP is partially funded by a donation from Gordy Schafer and the silent auction at the adult education event.





Aerial Monitoring:

TLA board member Art Hoadley continued his overflights of Torch Lake and Lake Bellaire. He has been keeping an eye on Golden Brown Algae in our lakes for over twelve years averaging more than 1000 pictures per flight. They help us

understand both multi-year and seasonal growth trends and are being used by Dr. Jan Stevenson as part of the GBA research activities.

Lake Monitoring and MORE:



We continue to monitor the water quality of the three lakes as we have been doing for more than two decades to understand long term trends and detect early warning signals.

Monitoring consists of water clarity measurements and Chlorophyll-a

samples every two weeks from June through August. Mid-lake phosphorous samples are taken in the spring and fall. Samples and measurements go to the Watershed Council, which publishes an annual report on the trophic status of each lake. We, also, regularly respond to inquiries about concerns regarding suspicious plant growth and water quality.

E.coli Monitoring

Water samples were collected from Eastport and Wilkinson Creeks and tested for E.coli which resulted in some alarmingly high bacteria counts. Samples will be tested a second time using genetic analysis to see if the source was human.



Grants and Funding

A Paddle Antrim Ripple Effect Grant helped to offset costs of GBA testing. Gordy Schafer donated to the SEOP in the name of long time board member Todd Collins. The Gerrit Lee Wierda Internship Memorial Fund helps to fund our internship program. The Dole Family Foundation continues to help fund our water quality studies and also granted funds to the intern program. Local business contributions and program attendees helped to make the silent auction fund raiser a success. Additional donations received from members to fund specific projects help keep these projects moving forward.

We sincerely appreciate those who help to fund our work!



Education Events and the Annual Meeting

The online boater safety seminar held in conjunction with marine patrol and the Antrim County Sheriff was well received. At our in-person event in July we learned about fish stocking, Paddle Antrim updates, the Bellaire Waste Water Treatment Plant and oak wilt. We also raised money for the SEOP with a silent auction. In August, at our Annual Meeting at the Shanty Creek Beach Club we socialized, enjoyed an excellent meal and heard great information on riparian rights.

***ALWAYS the first Thursday in August, mark your calendar now so you don't miss the 2025 Annual Meeting!
August 7, 2025***

In 2025, Three Lakes Association will:

1. Investigate causes of GBA with the help of scientists and volunteers.
2. Monitor water quality in Bellaire, Clam and Torch Lakes, their major tributaries and the lower Intermediate River.
3. Manage Eurasian Water Milfoil and aquatic invasive species.
4. Follow changes at the Bellaire wastewater treatment plant.
5. Keep in touch with State and local leaders about water quality concerns.
6. Engage the community on social media and host education events.
7. Publish an informative and engaging newsletter.
8. Collaborate with partner organizations in the Elk River Chain of Lakes.
9. Help implement the management plans for Grass River and the Elk River Chain of Lakes.

Join or Renew to Make it All Possible!

Please join or renew your membership today and consider an additional donation to support a specific project or program.

We thank you and our watershed thanks you!

To join or make a donation, go to our membership portal:

member.3lakes.com



Or mail us a check:

**Three Lakes Association (TLA)
P.O. Box 689
Bellaire, MI 49615**

Three Lakes Association Mission Statement

Provide leadership to preserve, protect, and improve the environmental quality of the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed for all generations with emphasis on Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, Torch Lake and their tributaries.