

Hardwood Lake Property Owners Association

www.hardwoodlake.org



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The newsletter is
in **color** on the website.

The sun
rises over
Hardwood
Lake on a
cold No-
vember
morning.



Weed control update

Report from the Lake Board meeting

Weed issues on Hardwood Lake have shifted since organized weed control activities began in 1995.

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www.hardwoodlake.org

For updated information click on *late breaking news* link on the **HOME** page

History

In the 1980's and before, efforts were made to control weeds and improve the lake water quality of Hardwood Lake. This was done on a volunteer basis and was minimally effective. Residents were asked to help pay for the costs, but only some participated. For example, two residents would pay, then the next wouldn't, the next pay, then next wouldn't.

In the early 1990's residents began to seriously look into weed control issues. The lake was becoming overgrown with weeds and green "pea soup" scum, planktonic algae, often appeared on the lake surface on warm summer days. It became difficult to boat down the center of the lake because of the weeds.

Residents learned of the Inland Lake Improvement Act. Petitions were circulated and eventually the Hardwood Lake Improvement Board was established in 1995.

In 1995 a three-year lake improvement project was approved that included aquatic plant control. Since 1996, plant control activities have been conducted under the direction of the lake board with Progressive Engineering being the lake oversight advisor. The primary plants being targeted for control in Hardwood Lake were Eurasian milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed and more recently, starry stonewort. The "pea soup" was a floating planktonic algae and was also addressed.

Throughout the treatment years we had to work under permits from the Michigan DNR. The lake gradually improved.

Positive experiences with fluridone on other inland lakes in Michigan led to discussion of the potential use of the chemical for a whole-lake treatment for the Eurasian milfoil in the year 2000. "Sonar" is the trade name for the chemical fluridone.

The treatment, though expensive, proved effective. Other whole-lake treatments were conducted in 2004 and 2008. Fluridone, needs to be kept at proper levels in the lake, around 6-parts-per-billion. In off years other chemicals were used to spot treat milfoil as it regrew.

After 2008 there was a decline in regrowth of milfoil. Very little was noticed for the next few years. Since the spot treatments were keeping the milfoil in check it was decided to hold off on additional whole-lake treatments.

In addition to the chemical treatments, mechanical weed harvesting was done. Areas to be treated or harvested were determined by aquatic biologists from Progressive during regular surveys of the lake. Progressive recommended contractors to the Lake Board for applying chemicals and harvesting weeds.

Hardwood Lake is a eutrophic lake. It will never be crystal clear. This was brought up during the first meeting with the DNR. We were also told it is a nutritionally rich lake. As one species of vegetation is eliminated another will grow in its place.

The lake drains roughly 4,000 acres, (see map above) primarily to the north, north east and south. The area to the northeast has considerable farming.



Now

In the summer of 2013 the harvesting contractor removed eight machine loads of weeds from the 17 acres earmarked.

During the fall of 2013 there was a noticeable increase in floating algae. Because the primary summer season

for water use was past, it was decided not to treat the lake as had been the practice.

In 2014 weed control continued. Milfoil was in control, though other weeds were growing. More algae appeared. While less than in the early years, it was there and unsightly. Algae is moved around by the wind. A south or east wind will push it to the populated north shore. In 2014 the harvesting contractor removed 22 machine loads of weeds from 19 acres of the lake. Harvested areas were basically the same for the two years.

During the 2014 Lake Association meeting, many questions were asked. A report was printed in the Fall 2014 newsletter.

Paul Hausler, the Marine Biologist from Progress Engineering addressed issues during the October Lake Board meeting. Progressive manages around 75 lakes in Michigan. The Lake Board manages the lake weed control projects. Funds are generated through property taxes. The Lake Board members are: Chair, Bill Cliff, Richland Township Trustee, Shirley Parent, Logan Township Treasurer, Mike DeMatteo, Ogemaw County Drain Commissioner, Pete Hennard, Ogemaw County Commissioner and David Sommers, representative of the Hardwood Lake Property Owners Association. The three year 2015-2017 lake management plan for Hardwood Lake is posted on the web site: www.hardwoodlake.org Go to the *Weed Control* tab. This also includes minutes from the October 13, 2014 Lake Board meeting. This is the direct link:

http://www.hardwoodlake.org/Resources/2015%20Hardwood%20Lake%202015_2017%20LMP2.pdf

Highlights from the Lake board meeting

Hausler said during the meeting:

The lake has an increase of plant growth and is moving from an algae lake to a rooted plant lake.

Lake algae is moving from planktonic algae to a blue-green algae, which he hasn't seen before on the lake. He has also seen a new algae this year. It is *Uroglena americana* algae, a colonial planktonic algae which lasts longer, six to eight weeks. It not only feeds on phosphorus but also on bacteria. We need more aggressive treatment.

Hausler said "This is the first I have seen of this type of algae. I have seen it on several lakes this year."

The state limits the area we can treat to within 300 feet of shore or the five foot depth contour. Algae grows out into the lake. The algae treatment we do is effective where we treat. He will talk to DEQ to see if other treatments can be done.

Hausler said Progressive does water body management thru water body samples and he charts what they find.

His example was:

- In August 2011 there was 0.0% Eurasian Milfoil and 0 density
- In September 2013 there was 0.2% Eurasian Milfoil and 10 density
- In August 2014 there was 5.7% Eurasian Milfoil and 302 density

There were a lot of questions from the public for Hausler at the meeting. Here are some of them and the response.

HAUSLER: If we are treating algae we are treating the symptoms. We are looking into the cause.

A concern that was voiced at the meeting:

QUESTION: How did we get off the four-year cycle of treating milfoil with Sonar. (NOTE: Sonar is the trade name for the chemical fluridone) I don't agree with you. It is a miserable plan.

HAUSLER: You are looking at general plant growth. We aren't locked into a four year plan.

COMMENT: It's not working.

HAUSLER: The Sonar is only for the milfoil.

QUESTION: Does Sonar affect fish?

HAUSLER: DNR says that fish populations actually increase.

QUESTION: When would you do the Sonar treatment?

HAUSLER: Usually in May but it depends on the water temperature.

QUESTION: When are plans made?

HAUSLER: I plan to ask the board if they want a Sonar treatment in 2015. We can then get started on permitting. Permits are usually issued in April.

The Board voted to have a whole lake treatment using fluridone in 2015.

Regarding algae

QUESTION: Why is this algae so aggressive?

HAUSLER: This is the first I have seen of this type of algae. I have seen it on several lakes this year.

QUESTION: How about we schedule treatments for one week before Memorial Day, July 1, August 1, and before Labor Day?

HAUSLER: We can schedule treatments for then. Memorial Day is water temperature dependent. We do have a limited budget.

QUESTION: If we are aggressive with the algae do we have to spray on the algae?

HAUSLER: We have to treat it when it is there. It is more effective when we spray early. It can be effective when there is no visible algae.

QUESTION: Are there other plans?

HAUSLER: May need a variance from the DNR and may need the DNR to come out and look at the lake. We are exploring this. It kind of came up on us in 2013. For the past three years it has been pretty good.

QUESTION: You're not sure what is causing the new algae?

HAUSLER: No.

QUESTION: Can you treat in less than five feet of water?

HAUSLER: We can treat in five feet or less. The floating algae moves around making treatment difficult.

QUESTION: There is algae around the docks. Some days it is there and then it goes away. Where does it go?

HAUSLER: The wind blows it around. That is one of the problems treating it. It moves.

There has been considerable algae growth reported throughout the region. If you recall, last summer Toledo had to shut down their water supply system to explosive growths of algae on Lake Erie. Paul said he has seen more algae on other inland lakes in the area.

When the project first started, in addition to the milfoil there was a lot of planktonic "green scum pea soup" algae. It gradually went away to suddenly reappear in late 2013 and through 2014.

This cycle seems to coincide with cattle farming northeast of the lake, which is the primary lake drainage area. Cattle farming reappeared in the past few years after an absence.

COMMENT: I can smell cow manure at my cabin.

HAUSLER: I identified four cattle operations in the northeast sector of the lake drainage area. Three have open ditch drainage which could cause problems.

PARENT: There is increased corn production in the area. Hay is a good crop. More corn helps lower the cost to feed the cattle.

HAUSLER: Farmers spread manure on fields. Under the Right to Farm Act they can do that as long as everything is legal. The USDA can investigate if the farmer is receiving federal aid. We need to test the area first before we make any allegations.

DeMATIO: Do you recommend education?

HAUSLER: There could be education programs for farmers.

Regarding weed harvesting

QUESTION: Discuss difference between harvesting and chemical treatment.

HAUSLER: Harvesting can spread milfoil. Probably won't harvest in 2015 if we do the full lake treatment.

QUESTION: Why do harvesting at all?

HAUSLER: It removes biomass. Some areas can't be chemically treated. We could do more chemical treatment but it is more expensive.

QUESTION: If you leave the biomass then what?

HAUSLER: We try to time the treatment early. When the plants are young. Then they die off leaving less biomass.

DeMATIO: With the weeds by the docks the harvester needs depth and room to work. What are other options?
HAUSLER: They can be raked out or chemically treated. Treatment is around \$400 - \$500 an acre.

DeMATIO: If the treatment is around the dock does the Lake Board pay for it?
HAUSLER: It is not part of the plan at this time. It can be added at the next public hearing.

DeMATIO: Are we going to do the treatments before the summers holidays?
HAUSLER: We can if the water temperature is OK. Memorial Day would be the questionable.

More lake management information can be found online at www.lakemichiganinfo.com. The website for Progressive Engineering is www.progressiveae.com

Other lake information

At the July association meeting a proposal was brought up hold a “Spring cleanup” weekend. The idea was for the association to rent a Dumpster for association members to use, perhaps over Memorial Day weekend. After much consideration the negatives far outweighed the advantages.

- Locals can and often fill them up and leave a mess all around Dumpster providers advised. The association would be responsible for the mess and cleanup, including renting another Dumpster.

- Someone would have to sit guard duty on it for the entire holiday weekend. This would include Friday and Tuesday.

- There would be **NO** yard waste, tires, concrete, appliances, heavy metals, paint or yard chemicals allowed.

- If the Dumpster filled up, we could not do a swap-out over a holiday weekend.

Sue Young looked into places items could be taken, like St. Vincent or Habitat Restore. Also scrap metal dealers and possible dump/landfill operations.



- Billy’s Contracting, 989-753-7719 They have Dumpsters of various sizes.
- Republic Waster 800-858-0089 provides curb side pickup - everything must be in container. They also provide Dumpster service. They may allow you to bring items in. In late 2014 they were charging \$61.08 for a pickup truck load, about 2 yards.

- Waste Management (989) 753-7719 provides curb side pickup - everything must be in container. They also provide Dumpster service.

- Rifken in West Branch, 989-345-1300 buys scrap metal at market price.

- St. Vincent de Paul has outlets in Skidway Lake 989-873-5797 and West Branch 989-345-0779. They take donations of items they can resell.

- Habitat for Humanity is locate in West Branch, 989-345-7085. They also take donations of items they can resell. They offer pick-up service.

- West Branch Recycling and Transfer Center for residents of Logan Township 989-345-5450

www.westbranchtownship.org



Looking for something to do?

Check out the local area websites for current activities.

www.westbranch.com

www.tawas.com

www.ogemawherald.com

www.visitwestbranch.com

The sites are linked on

www.hardwoodlake.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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