

BLACK LAKE NEWS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President -Virgil Smith

Vice Pres.-Roger Selvig

Treasurer and Website - Cindy Trepanier

Secretary - Linda Smith

Trustees -Ron Dulak
Dick Hopkins
Erin McLean

Membership and Newsletter-
Sharon Dulak

Secchi Disk-
Bob Williams

Banquet- Mary Rocco



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT VIRGIL SMITH 989-733-8089

All is well at Black Lake. It's a great place! Over the past eighty-seven years the Black Lake Association has contributed significantly to its' greatness. To continue this legacy, the following are a few of the activities now being addressed.

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

New By-Laws were approved and implemented for the governance of the BLA at the September 2014 meeting. The BLA will now be governed by a board of nine directors who will be elected at the first BLA General Meeting, on June 8, 2015, at 6 PM, in the Grant Township Hall. Please plan to attend this meeting. BLA officers will then be elected from this board of directors. The new By-Laws can be viewed on the BLA website,

www.blacklakeassociation.com

WEED AND INVASIVE VEGETATION STUDY

This study was conducted by the TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED COUNCIL.. The final report is being prepared and will be presented at the BLA General Meeting. The only invasive vegetation found in Black Lake was phragmites. There is a patch 200 feet long and five feet deep along the North shoreline. The BLA will work with the property owner to insure that it is eradicated.

WALLEYE FISHERY

Based on DNR shoreline surveys and catch reports, the walleye fishery is improving. The BLA will continue to work closely with the DNR to bring Black Lake back to a great walleye lake. Future BLA walleye plantings will be coordinated with the DNR. An article within this newsletter, written by DNR biologist Tim Cwalinski,

provides additional walleye fishery information.

ONAWAY STATE PARK BOAT LAUNCH

In an attempt to improve boat launching/extraction and traffic flow, the DNR State Park Division has redesigned and replaced the boat launch. In an effort to further improve the launch, please provide feedback to the BLA and/or the DNR regarding your experience using this new launch.

The BLA needs your help in order to continue its legacy. Please consider becoming a board member, committee member, and/or beach representative. Try to attend meetings. Your ideas, feedback, support and participation are essential for our success.

I hope all is well with you.

BLACK LAKE ASSOCIATION MEETING SCHEDULE

All of the BLA board meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at the Grant Township Hall at 7:30 pm.

The General Meeting is a pot luck which begins at 6:00 pm and is followed by the General Meeting. Everyone is welcome

May 11 - board meeting

June 8 - General Meeting

Pot Luck Dinner

Bring a dish to pass.
6:00 PM

July 13 -board meeting

July 18-BLA Banquet

August 10 -board meeting

September 14-board meeting

October 12-board meeting



2014 Walleye Raffle Winners



Kayak
Virgil Smith

Casino Package
Corey McGinn

Gas Grill
Steve Wild

**\$100 Tom's
Certificate**
Graham Edwards

**\$100 Tom's
Certificate**
D. O'Neil

WEEDS IN THE LAKE THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE NECESSARY KEVIN CRONK TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED COUNCIL

Aquatic plants are integral to a healthy lake ecosystem. They provide habitat, refuge and food to a large variety of waterfowl, fish, aquatic insects and other organisms. Like their terrestrial counterparts, aquatic plants produce oxygen as a by-product of photosynthesis. Aquatic plants utilize nutrients in the water that could otherwise stimulate nuisance algae blooms. A number of aquatic plants, including bulrush, water lily, cattails and pickerel weed help prevent shoreline erosion by absorbing wave energy and moderating currents. In addition, soft sediments along the lake bottom are held in place by rooted aquatic plants.

In spite of the benefits that aquatic plants provide, an overabundance of "weeds" can become a nuisance, making it difficult or undesirable to boat, fish or swim. Excessive plant growth can affect the entire lake ecosystem, particularly when non-native nuisance species are introduced. In lakes plagued by weed growth, it is sometimes necessary to implement controls, whether herbicide treatment, manual removal, or other methods. However, removing or treating the weeds can have negative impacts on the lake ecosystem. Lakes

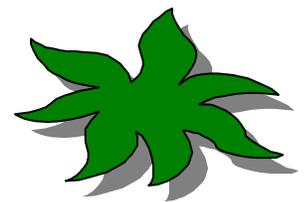
with unhealthy or reduced aquatic plant communities can experience declining fisheries due to habitat and food source losses. Aquatic plant loss may also lead to lower daytime dissolved oxygen levels and greater shoreline erosion. Furthermore, weed control efforts can open the door for invasive species, such as curly-leaf pondweed or Eurasian watermilfoil, by weakening the resistance of native plant communities.

Due to the importance to the lake ecosystem and the potential for problems with nuisance growth and invasive species, managing aquatic vegetation is an extremely important component of lake management. Recognizing this, the Black Lake Association has sponsored two aquatic vegetation surveys over the past ten years. Aquatic plant communities were surveyed by Tip of the Mitt Watershed council staff in 2005 and again in 2014 to document species, abundance, density and the presence of non-native species.

In 2005, 32 different plant species were found, all of which were native to Michigan. Over 85% of the lake contained little or no vegetation. Vegetated areas were dominated by musk-

grass and variable-leaf watermilfoil, the watermilfoil growing at nuisance levels in much of the northwest corner of the lake. Maps for the 2014 survey are still forthcoming, but preliminary results are similar to the 2005 survey, showing 84% of the lake with little or no vegetation. Non-native plants were found in 2014, but limited to two small invasive phragmites stands on the north side of the lake. The BLA has been alerted to this problem and plans to nip these infestations in the bud in 2015. The final report and maps will be completed during the winter and made available on both the BLA and Watershed Council's web sites.

Kevin Cronk will be presenting his report at the June 8, Potluck General Meeting.



DNR FISHERIES REPORT

TIM CWALINSKI

It has been more than ten years now since here at the Gaylord DNR Fisheries office we started receiving frequent calls from concerned anglers at Black Lake. I still remember that first call; I believe his name was Jim Wickert and his detailed walleye catch history soon followed in the mail. The calls and letters kept coming in and the concerns were the same: dwindling numbers of legal size (15 inches or larger) walleye were being caught, but more alarmingly, sub-legal walleye were getting scarce at the end of angler lines. Consider before /during this period that the invasive zebra mussels had likely changed the plankton communities at Black Lake, making less food (at the microscopic level) available for all juvenile fish, regardless of species.

One of the tools we at the DNR use to assess year class strength of walleye in a lake is to electrofish the shoreline at night in 2-6 feet of water in the fall and document the catch rates of age 0 and age 1 walleye. Age 0 walleye growth to their first fall will typically be about 5-7 inches and age 1 fish will be approximately 10 inches. These surveys are done over significant reaches of shoreline so as to not bias a sample. Sometimes, we survey over multiple nights. DNR had juvenile catch data for this lake

from fall surveys each year from 1997 through 2000. Catch numbers were relatively low for those years, but present in enough numbers to support a fishery in coming years. The year 1999 had a reasonable year class, based on the catch of age 1 fish in 2000 (notes from a fall sturgeon index that year indicated good numbers of young walleye). These were wild fish, too.

The DNR, with some assistance from Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, ramped up these fall assessments after 2005, (based on your calls), and have not missed a year since then. Electrofishing catches of wild age 0 fish remained very low from 2005 through 2009. This data continued to support angler sentiments regarding reduced wild production. Around 2007 we developed a management plan for Black Lake walleye which included stocking spring fingerlings (1-2 inches) from DNR rearing ponds. Our goal was to stock significant numbers at least three years (in a five year span), monitor fingerling survival (with electrofishing and angler reports), and determine their overall recruitment in future years to the fishery. There was a problem though. The fish virus VHS (viral hemorrhagic septicemia) showed up in the Great Lakes, and it forced Fishery Division to take a temporary hiatus from

statewide walleye production (broodstock comes from Great Lakes sources). You wanted us to stock, local Fisheries managers planned on stocking, but we didn't have the fish. I remember that Black Lake Association meeting in September 2007; you didn't get the fish you wanted and Dave Borgeson and I left with a big headache. Our plan was good, we just needed the fish. Those fish did come.

By 2010, the stocking concerns with VHS had been loosened, (not lifted) and we were able to stock Black Lake with healthy fingerlings that year, nearly 200,000 Muskegon strain. These DNR spring fingerlings stocking efforts continued in 2011 (119,983), 2012 (192,541) and 2014 (204,688 dual tribal/DNR plant). Thus we achieved our three year stocking plan and included an additional year. These were significant stocking numbers and we were lucky to get them each year. Simultaneously, the BLA was approved to stock fall fingerlings at smaller rates in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012. Thus we had stocked large numbers of 2 inch spring fingerlings in June (which will be 5-7 inches by October) and the BLA was stocking smaller numbers of 5-7 inch fish in November.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



- **Black Lake**
- **Has a surface area of over 10,000 acres.**
- **Is the 9th largest lake in Michigan**
- **The deepest point is 50 feet.**
- **The only outlet from the lake is the Lower Black River.**



Please help your beach representative by mailing in your dues early. It makes their job easier.

DNR FISHERIES REPORT CONTINUED

STURGEON SEASON OVER IN ONE DAY



303 REGISTERED ANGLERS

Tom Madison
Speared the first fish.

75 pounds
67 inch
Female

Jason Crawford
Speared the second.

45 pounds
58 inch
Male

Todd Zeller
Speared the third.

80 pounds
69 inch
Female

James Bodinger
Speared the fourth.

87 pounds
71 inch
Female

Doug Blaskowski
Final fish speared.

31 pounds
50 inch
female

It is important to remember that when we conduct our fall assessment of wild/stocked 5-7 inch fish, it is done in late September/early October, thus it is really only a measure of survival for the age 0 walleye that were stocked in the spring.

Fall electrofishing catch rates of wild age 0 fish from 2005 through 2009 ranged from 0.0 to 0.3 per hour. Since 2010, our electrofishing catch rates have ranged from 5.4 to 30.9 age 0 walleye per hour in stocking years, and 0.6 per hour in a non-stocking year (2013). In addition, the high catch rates were determined to be stocked fish, not wild, based on marking results in 2011 and 2012. In those years, fingerling walleye when stocked were marked with an antibiotic stain called oxytetracycline (OTC). This allowed us to sacrifice a sample of fish each fall and examine their bone structure for that mark. From the sample, all the age 0 walleye were stocked from a DNR stocked source.

So, stocked fish were surviving well, wild fish were not. This is the good and the bad. It is important to remember that recruitment of a wild year class of walleye can be hindered in a variety of manners including: 1) low numbers of adults, 2) poor survival of eggs due to variable factors (temperature, waves, predators), or 3) successful hatching of fry from a sufficient egg source and lack

of survival to fingerling stage. In a few years, there will be plenty of broodstock from the various stocked sources, and if natural reproduction remains poor, then other factors (plankton levels) may be limiting natural reproduction. It does not take a lot of adult walleye to produce a good year class, but it does require all the right hatching and early survival conditions for a good year class to eventually be available to anglers as legal size fish. We believe wild production in Black Lake is more hindered by conditions 1 and 2 above, not broodstock, but it could all be a piece of the puzzle. Right now we are doing our part to rule out condition 1.

So why would 1 1/2 inch walleye survive better than wild fish? Our stocked fish are already past the plankton feeding stage when stocked and are already busy feeding on larval suckers, perch, etc. Wild walleye fry have to survive through the plankton eating stage in the lake first and then switch to feeding on larval fish. That is just after 1 inch in length. Remember, increased water clarity from zebra mussels means less plankton in the water column. Zebra mussels siphon out plankton for food!

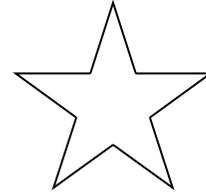
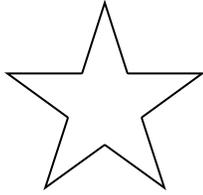
We hope to maintain some consistency to fall electrofishing at Black Lake to assess future walleye production and survival. This will not occur every year, since we can't afford to

lose sight of all the other lakes we manage in the eastern U.P. and northern L.P. Yet, we the DNR Fisheries Division have provided a strong commitment to the Black Lake walleye angler. Periodic supplemental stocking of walleye by DNR may be needed down the road. We will learn more as we go, as we have learned a great deal in the last decade. Together we will watch where these recent stronger year classes go in the future.

In addition to walleye, we are very interested in muskellunge and northern pike catches at Black Lake. We ask muskellunge anglers to talk to us more. They are a fish we struggle to gather info for and anglers can help us make better decisions on this species locally and statewide. Oh yea, by the way, we remain committed to Black Lake sturgeon populations and the associated fishery. We highly encourage anglers to contact us, not only when there is a real or perceived downswing in a fishery, but when things are bright as well. Angler reports are vital to fish management.

Enjoy your lake, it's a good one.





Black Lake Association Annual Dinner
 Saturday , July 18, 2015

Black Lake Golf Club and Grill
 2800 Maxon Road,
 Onaway, Michigan 49765

5:30 - 6:30 pm Appetizers
 6:30 pm Buffet Dinner
 \$25.00 per person

Reservations required by July 12
 Limited seating for 100 people

Any questions, call Mary Pynnonen-Rocco
 248-762-0152

Please reserve _____ dinners for July 18, 2015. I have enclosed (\$25.00 per person) _____ to cover the cost of the dinner.

Name(s) _____

PLEASE RETURN PAYMENT, ALONG WITH THIS FORM BEFORE July 12, 2015 to:

The Black Lake Association
 P.O. Box 302

Onaway, Michigan 49765





Many thanks to our
Beach Representa-
tives for all they do.

- Liz Gowland
- Sarah Soule
- Patti Archambo
- Sandy Schnau
- Florence Roberts
- Julie Johnson
- Linda Van Sickle
- Bette/Dick Hopkins
- Charlene Swihart
- Graham Edwards
- Linda Smith
- Mike Kretz
- Norman Schwartz
- Ray Garrison
- Dar Grund
- Eugene Osantowski
- Mabel Leppler
- Lynne Henzler
- Kay Hoefflin
- Missy Beardsley
- Dana Brophy
- Lois Overton
- Sue Madden
- Sheila Kraycs
- Gary Shepherd
- Diane Kade
- Marlene George
- Mary Rocco
- Gail Smith
- Sharon Dulak
989 - 733-2565



Black Lake Association

ONAWAY STATE PARK UPDATE

JEREMY SPELL, UNIT SUPERVISOR

The Onaway State Park boat launch re-configuration project has been completed. Thanks to the work of the Black Lake Association (BLA), the fishing in Black Lake has been improving tremendously over the past few years, resulting in more user pressure on the boat launch at Onaway State Park. In an effort to ease this pressure and create a better flow of traffic, the DNR met with the BLA and worked to come up with a design that would help speed up launch and retrieve time.

There are many challenges that exist at the Onaway State Park boat launch which made any major change in design and development not possible at this point in time. Thus, the District Planner came up with a design that accomplished the following:

- Removed the existing ramp.
- Installed a new ramp on an angle

that allows vehicles to back trailers straight in vs. having to back on a 90 degree angle.

- Created an improvement in the flow of traffic utilizing a one way in and out approach.
- Created a project that could be constructed within a year or two.
- Created a project that could be done by our own DNR staff.
- Made the funding of the project attainable.

Over the winter of 2013 / 2014 we worked to obtain the proper DEQ permitting and were able to have the application submitted and approved by July, 2014. Within that permit, we built in more approval than what was actually needed in an effort to not have to duplicate efforts should the major development be determined to be possible. Within that permit we also built in annual maintenance dredging so that DNR

crews can come in every spring and clean up the launch and repair any ice damage to the jetty.

The DNR Parks and Recreation Grayling Construction Crew was able to complete the project in late September, in just about a year's time, from meeting with the BLA. We understand that parking is a major issue and will be working to make improvements to the overflow parking area as well, with new signage to designate areas to park, so that parking is more organized.

Next year will be a year of trial and error. The staff plans to monitor the launch and modify and adjust in areas where needed. We ask for your patience while we work to figure out how to best implement these changes and welcome any constructive comments to help the flow of traffic. This will be a season of learning for both users and staff.