News from the Lake Shore

BLACK LAKE NEWS

SPRING 2021

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

BRETT TREPANIER 989-370-4949

As we all know Covid-19 put many restrictions on person to person interaction in 2020. With this in mind, we were very limited in the projects we could do and the meetings we could have.

We did not have in person meetings in May or June, but hosted the rest of the scheduled meetings outside, in the pavilion at Grant Township Hall.

The walleye stocking ponds had no fish this year due to restrictions, so there were no plantings in Black Lake. Sturgeon Season had a record number of anglers this year at 596. Seven fish were harvested in two hours and six minutes. The biggest fish taken was 63 inches and 61 pounds.

The Alverno Dam, Black River Limited Partnership (BRLP) is still in the process of amending their license. The Black Lake Association (BLA) has been highly involved with this process. We feel it is getting closer to a resolution and may see a reviewable document as soon as this summer.

With vaccines now available and restrictions letting up, we are hopeful to do more this year.

We are also looking at possibly having the BLA Banquet on July 10, 2021 at the Black Lake Golf Club. If it is possible we will make sure you are all notified.

We are also planning on putting the buoys in at the mouth of the Lower Black River. Jim Coleman has generously volunteered to take on this responsibility. Thank you Jim.

On that note, I am reminded that Bob Williams , who has done the water quality testing on Black Lake for years is retiring. He has done a great job for many years. Thank you Bob. If anyone is interested in doing the water quality testing, please contact me for more information.

I would also like to thank all of you for the many donations you have made this year. They are much appreciated and are put to good use.

Now, lets hope we can look forward to a Spring with less restrictions and a Summer full of relaxation, boating, swimming, fishing and just plain enjoyment.

DOES FORREST MANAGEMENT EFFECT ALGAL BLOOMS?

TIM CWALINSKI-DNR SENIOR FISHERIES

The BLA reached out to the Michigan State Forest viewer to answer this question.

The cuttings in the upper watershed of Black Lake are viewed by a Fisheries Division biologist , particularly when they are in proximity to water sources and typically include buffer strips. The algal bloom in the lake are more related to nearshore phosphorus sources, groundwater upwellings (that include quite a bit of natural phosphorus), older septic tanks and fertilizers used around the lake. Despite this, overall phosphorus levels as measured by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council remain relatively low in Black Lake. Hot summers can often lead to increased algal blooms. The periodic nutrients that are brought into the lake from the Upper Black River during flood events are minimal and are often dropped out in the upper ponds of Tower and Kleber.

As for the timber harvests in the watershed, we harvest wood all across state forest lands based on our management plans and goals for an individual area. All of the harvest plans are reviewed by foresters, wildlife and fisheries biologists, and recreational specialists. These plans are also put our for public comment two years prior to any work being done on the ground. These comments are all collected and taken into account when we finalize those plans.

2021 STURGEON SEASON

Although there was no Sturgeon Shivaree this year, because of Covid, the sturgeon season went on. It lasted two hours and six minutes. A total of seven sturgeon were speared. There were 596 anglers registered for this season.

James Paulson got the first sturgeon—50 inch male—26 pounds. It had been tagged in 2014 and recaptured in 2016 and 2018 .

Bryan Wilson speared the second one which was a 54 inch male—37 pounds, tagged in 2014, recaptured 2018.

Chris Wilson harvested the third one, a 63 inch female weighing 61 pounds.

Jerry Hillis then captured another 50 inch male, which weighed 27 pounds.

Sam Beck brought in the fifth sturgeon, a female, 57 inches long and 38 pounds.

Mike Manning followed with a 51 inch male which weighed 25 pounds. It had a coded wire tag.

Andrew LaLonde finished with a 60 inch female weighing 43 pounds, it had been tagged in 2006.

BLACK LAKE FISHERY

TIM CWALINSKI—DNR SENIOR FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

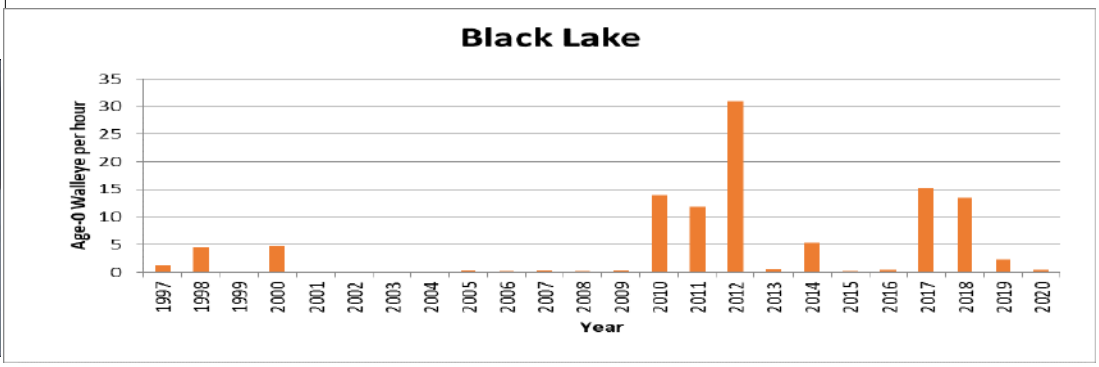
It has been a couple years or so since I was asked to write a short blurb on current or future fish management practices at Black Lake. The DNR just finished working through procedures in order to have the 2021 Black Lake sturgeon season. We decided on a modified February fishing season due to the many working restrictions we were faced with as a result of COVID. There was an unlimited entry for anglers, but no face to face registration this year. We established an online registration which required participants to read through the season rules and regulations, comply with them, and then register. Text messages were the primary means for fish updates during the season, so cell phone numbers for each angler or fishing party were required. We also discouraged gatherings around the harvested fish, so fish registration was at a designated site off the lake. We were faced with different hurdles this season and we did our best to continue holding a fishing season, while taking appropriated safety precautions for our staff and the public.

Lets get to the walleye. If you can see the graph below, the strongest year classes of walleye in Black Lake corresponded to spring fingerling stocking efforts. This is represented by the catch rate of age-0 in the fall (4—6 inches) from our nighttime electrofishing surveys. Good catches of juveniles from fall electrofishing were documented in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2017 and 2018. In years when stocking was not accomplished, the catch rates were low or absent. Our fisheries unit had a plan to try and stock Black lake in 2020 , either from the DNR walleye ponds or from the tribal ponds in the Upper Peninsula. When COVID hit in the spring of 2020, DNR was forced to shut down many of our field operations which would require gathering of field personnel. This included the statewide walleye egg take operation on the Muskegon River. We simply had no fish to raise and then stock out statewide. Many other field operations were shut down in 2020 due to the pandemic. As of this date, we are hoping to reestablish egg take operations for walleye and other species (muskellunge, steelhead) in the spring of 2021. Let's keep our fingers crossed and lets hope for good pond production of walleye so that we can get Black Lake back o the stocking list for 2021. We are reliant on natural reproduction of other species in Black Lake and must ride the roller coaster of cyclic production for these species. Hopefully, walleye natural reproduction will someday kick in strong again at Black Lake like it has re-surged at neighboring Mullett Lake.

You might see our crews on Black Lake surveying fish is May/June 2021. DNR surveys lakes statewide under a standardized sampling protocol where survey effort is a product of lake size. Lake surveys are done in this neck of the woods typically between mid-May and mid-June when water temperatures are between 55 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. This type of survey is not species specific (as we have done in the past at Black Lake for walleye or sturgeon) and is a broader look at the entire fish community. Keep an eye out for us this spring, and please steer clear of our buoys and nets!

Good Luck Fishing in 2021.

This graph illustrating strength of walleye year classes in Black Lake based on fall catch of age-0 in given years. **Sampling was not conducted in 1999, 2001-2004. Spring fingerling walleye were stocked in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2018.**



SWIMMER'S ITCH HISTORY PROGRESSION

CINDY TREPANIER

Many of you have wondered about the history of Swimmer's Itch on Black Lake. The following is from the Black Lake Association minutes from May 20, 1991 through June 14, 1993.

May 20, 1991—Members of the BLA met in Lansing with Sen. John Pridnia, Mark Knudsen, Ike Volkers, Public Health Director, Dan Wyant, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture, Howard Wandell DNR of Lakes and Streams, and Ned Wickes from Higgins Lake. The BLA was informed that there was no grant money available at this time and that they would be unable to spray Copper Sulfate this year for swimmer's itch, due to an F.I.F.R.A. 24© exemption which allows states to register additional uses of federally registered pesticides. The suppliers also felt it was too costly to make it worth their while .

June 10, 1991—Dr Harvey Blankenspoor did a survey of the type of waterfowl and snails in Black Lake. He explained his program of treatment with Prazagnantel, which is used to treat a number of parasitic worms. The motion was made at the time to stop using Copper Sulfate. A letter was then sent to all BLA members to explain the Swimmer's Itch program of Harvey Blankenspoor. The BLA was advised by the DNR that permits for the use of Copper Sulfate were not available. Based on their complaints in the 1990 season, the use of Copper Sulfate to control swimmer's itch was ineffective. The DNR letter stated the Copper Sulfate is toxic to other small aquatic organisms, including small fish.

September 9, 1991—There were less cases of swimmer's itch reported during that summer and the lake had not been sprayed that year.

June 30, 1992—The lake was sprayed.

October 5, 1992—The BLA was informed that whomever signed their name to the application for a permit to use Copper Sulfate would be held liable and could be sued for cleanup costs if it was found harmful to the environment.

June 14, 1993—Dr. Harvey Blankenspoor's program will not be implemented in Black Lake. There was no explanation recorded as to why. The boat, trailer and motor that the BLA used to spray Copper Sulfate was sold.

At this time the BLA is still looking into other lakes results and options for swimmer's itch control. We are following Freshwater Solutions, LLC and all the new information they are researching. Ron Reimink presented his work at the June 10, BLA meeting.

GYPSY MOTH CATERPILLAR SIGHTING

ROGER BERGSTEDT

This summer, Dave Turzewski and I met with Amanda Bell, USGS, at the Onaway State Park relative to a study on blue-green algae. Dave noticed some caterpillars on a tree, which Amanda quickly identified as gypsy moth caterpillars. These are every bit as serious as the more familiar tent caterpillars. I had not seen a gypsy moth caterpillar since the late 1980's, when an infestation reached our area. At that time, I saw numerous egg masses on trees when I lived on M68, north of Millersburg. Fortunately, that winter was the most severe in the 35 years I have lived in this area and caused (I can't imagine how else it happened) their total disappearance along with most opossums that winter. I hadn't seen a gypsy moth since. Now, 30 years later, we once again on the edge of a northward moving infestation. Spurred by the incident with Dave, I searched my property on the south side of Black Lake and found five egg masses on buildings and oak trees. Just south of Tower Bob and Sharon Lyon are seeing many more. Some serious defoliation occurred this summer just as much farther south as Canada Creek Ranch.

The female moth is flightless which limits the speed of spread (with some cautions related to transporting egg masses and spread by wind of caterpillars on silk threads). Therefore we can have some effect on the small scale of our yards by removing caterpillars, searching in late summer for the egg masses and destroying them, or possibly baiting and trapping the male moths with pheromone baits. The PDF file on the BLA website gives guidance on identifying the caterpillars and adult moths, explains their life history and provides links online to more history, relevant biology and control techniques.

FRESHWATER SOLUTIONS

Innovative Swimmer's Itch Strategies

Freshwater Solutions believe that the best way to empower all riparians to swim without fear of contracting swimmer's itch is to discover, refine and validate successful prevention strategies. The focus needs to be shifted from removing snails and waterfowl, to preventing worms (cercariae) from entering the skin. A paradigm shift from lake-wide control to individual prevention has distinct advantages. Ron Reimink and Dr. Patrick Harrington have a definite initiative which will be presented at a BLA meeting in the future, once Covid restrictions are lifted.

BLACK LAKE ASSOCIATION MEETING DATES

These are the scheduled meeting dates . There will be no speakers scheduled until Covid restrictions are lifted.

May 10, 2021
June 14, 2021
July 12, 2021
August 9, 2021
September 13, 2021
October 11, 2021

We will notify members if there are any changes.

Many thanks go out to all the wonderful people who care about Black Lake and volunteer their time and energy to walk the beaches, collect dues and give out membership cards and decals.

ROBERT WALTER
DANA BROPHY
MISSY BEARDSLEY
KAY HOEFFLIN
LYNNE HENZLER
CONNIE NADJARIAN
SUE MADDEN
SHEILA KRAYCS
RICK PETERS
ARLENE HARMAN
HEIDE PENHALE
GARY SHEPHERD
MARLENE GEORGE
GAIL SMITH
SUE ROBERTS
EUGENE OSTANTOWSKI
LYNDA O'NEIL
JILL LEWIS
JANICE WOOD
PATTI ARCHAMBO
MIKE KRETZ
CHARLENE SWIHART
INGRID SENDLEBACK
NEIL SENDLEBACK
DEBORAH REDDER
JULIE JOHNSON
LINDA VANSICKLE
SANDY SCHNAU
CASSIE COBB
JOCELYN BERGSTEDT
PAM SELVIG
RON DULAK
CINDY TREPANIER

If any of you are interested in becoming a beach representative, please call me .

SHARON DULAK–989-733-2565

BLACK RIVER MARINA AND STATE PARK UPDATE

KEITH CHELI

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND REGIONAL FIELD PLANNER

MDNR PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION

The Black lake Association asked Keith Cheli , MDNR Parks and Recreation Division for an update.

.....

It has been some time since we have provided an update on the activity at the project site.

You may recall that our agency was working towards mitigation of limited hazardous materials on site an if funding allowed, removal of some or all of the building structures. Based on recent contractor bid results the proposed work did not align with funding available. The revised strategy will focus on removal of the abandoned fuel tank, underground piping and fuel dispenser which will reduce the attractive nuisances and streamline further efforts to clean up the property. We expect this work may unfold this spring or early summer.

Our next step will be to request funding for consideration for approval during the next State fiscal year which begins October 1st. The funding request would include intent to hire a qualified professional consultant to initiate large scale site reconnaissance, planning and design for proposed redevelopment into an improved public boating access. Planning and design will take into account comprehensive site clean up and how these efforts can be incorporated into the process of site improvement to gain efficiencies in site construction activity and material placement. As the planning process unfolds there will be formal opportunity for stakeholder and public input on the proposed plan design, including options for future partnerships as they relate to site operations, invasive species education and management. If funding is approved for this activity we expect to begin planning and design in the spring or early summer of 2022.

Also some of you have inquired about our agency efforts at Onaway State Park to construct a new park pavilion that will compensate for the historic structure that burned during the winter several years ago. We are pleased to announce that this project will be moving forward and we expect the contract for the construction to be executed the first week of February. The new pavilion will be located in the day use area of the park along the lakeshore and display a classical architectural style similar to the former pavilion structure. Construction will take place over the 2021 summer and fall seasons during which the day use area will be closed to the public.

BITS AND PIECES FROM THE LAKE SHORE

Sharon Dulak reported that Huron Pines delivered their final report on the invasive species survey they finished in September of 2020. There found one stand of invasive phragmites which will be treated this year. They weren't able to do it last fall because of Covid. Purple Loosestrife is still in abundance and they identified some spotted knapweed around the lake. The complete report can be viewed on our website, www.blacklakeassociation.com

---

Connie Nadjarian set a tentative banquet date with the Black Lake Golf Club for July 10, 2021 It will go forward if Covid restrictions are lifted and we all feel safe to attend. Connie said she would be grateful for any donations for the raffle. You may contact her for more information.

The BLA has also been in contact with the sheriff's offices of both Presque Isle and Cheboygan Counties because of complaints of reckless use of jet skis'. Both Sheriff's Offices will be checking the lake periodically. If you see and can identify the law breakers you should call the office in your county.

231-627-8888 in Cheboygan
989-734-7431 in Presque Isle

INVESTIGATING HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS ON BLACK LAKE

CAROLINE KESON
TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED CONCIL

Summers on Black Lake are a time for fishing, swimming and just having fun in the water. In 2019 and 2020, summer fun came to an abrupt halt when nuisance algal blooms appeared on the lake, closing beaches and worrying anglers, swimmers and pet owners. The algal was a particular kind of cyanobacteria (also known as blue-green algae) that can produce toxins that are harmful to humans, pets and other animals. The toxins-producing algal is called microcystin and the toxin it produces is called mycrocystin. The result is a harmful algal bloom (HAB). Microcystin is a toxin that mostly affects the liver if ingested in large doses. Externally, it can produce a skin rash or other irritations. If ingested, it can cause gastrointestinal symptoms and inhalation of water droplets containing microcystin can irritate the eyes and throat. While there have been no documented human deaths from microcystin, dogs , wildlife and livestock have died following exposure. In the past few years, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) has taken the lead in responding to HABs in Michigan. Other types of cyanobacteria are not harmful, so identification and testing is important.

Worldwide, HABs are increasing in their frequency, magnitude and intensity. A recently published EGLE report found that HAB complaints in Michigan are increasing and suggests that increased attention to HABs plays a part. HABs are not a widespread problem across Michigan, but are more likely to occur in southern Michigan. Lakes with a water control structure accounted for the majority of lakes with blooms between 2016 and 2019. Large human populations, development along riparian areas, climate change, intense agriculture and urban land use all contribute to the risk of HABs. Some research points to zebra mussels as the culprit in lakes with seemingly good water quality. Zebra muscles filter particles our of the water, allowing sunlight to jumpstart algae growth. Furthermore, zebra mussels don't eat microcystin, allowing the algae to grow without competition. Zebra mussels can also release nutrients such as phosphate and ammonia into the water, giving algae another boost.

Tip of the mitt Watershed Council is investigating the HABs problem and one culprit may be nonpoint source pollution. Such as agriculture , forestry, urban areas, and residences. Some examples of pollutants and their effects are sediment covering spawning habitat and excess nutrients feeding nuisance algae and plants. Nonpoint source pollution is best attacked on a watershed—wide scale, which is why the Watershed Council is partnering with local groups to form a Black Lake Watershed Advisory Committee. The committee will help create a watershed management plan that an identify problems and solutions. The Watershed Council is working with EGLE to monitor additional parameters to help understand the causes and seasonal changes of HABs in Black Lake. It is difficult to predict when HABs will occur for a few reasons. The genes of microcystis populations in each lake differ from lake to lake, causing them to react slightly differently to changes in water quality, and also the chemical make-up of algae changes within lakes over the summer. Usually when HABs occur in lakes, they are localized, not lake-wide. Once EGLE receives a HAB complaint, they alert the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which alerts local health departments and lake associations.

SOME WAYS TO IDENTIFY HARMFUL AGAL BLOOMS

NOT A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM

Individual leaves (3-5mm) floating on the surface of the water, a likely duck weed.

Attached to rocks or you pick it up with a stick it is likely Cladophora, a another kind of algae that grows in hair like strands

Yellow a likely pollen

Turquoise, like the Caribbean Sea Clear water mixed with limestone deposits cause this beautiful phenomenon

MAYBE A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM

Small, green, pinhead-sized particles that collect in a layer on the water's surface in calm weather.

Looks like a paint spill or pea soup

Water is brownish-green, milky green or bluish

Forming clumps, smells like grass clippings or rotting garbage.

IF YOU SUSPECT AN ALGAL BLOOM

DO'S

Email algaebloom@michigan.gov with the location and a picture.

If you suspect that you or your pet have come into contact with an active bloom call MITOXICS and Health hotline at 1-800-648-6942. you can also call the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for pet concerns at 1-800-292-3939.

Remember, not all algal blooms are harmful, but we can't know for sure unless the bloom is tested for the microcystin toxin.

DON'TS

Don't swim and don't let pets drink the water of a bloom.

Don't sample the bloom yourself.

Don't eat fish for three weeks after microcystin is detected. This is the MOST conservative recommendation from algae experts. While we know microcystin is most likely to be in the guts of fish, there are still a lot of unknowns. Ingesting microcystin yourself is still the main way you could become ill.

WATERSHED 101

ELI BAKER
WATER RESOURCES EDUCATION COORDINATOR
TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED COUNCIL

Have you ever passed a sign welcoming you to a watershed and wondered what that means or why it matters? Well, here are a few facts that show just how important watersheds are and what we can do to protect the health of our watersheds.

First of all, a watershed is a land area that drains into a steam or other body of water. Gravity pulls water from rain storms, snow melt and even groundwater supplies downhill until it reaches the lowest point , where bodies of water are found. The boundaries of a watershed are determined by the shape of the land and generally connect all of the highest points around the body of water.

Some watersheds are very small and drain to tiny unnamed streams, like one that may flow through your backyard. Other watersheds, like the Black River Watershed, are very large and may cover thousands of square miles. The tiny watersheds collectively make up a neighborhood, and many neighborhoods make up a town. Any place where you stand can be part of many watersheds of varying sizes. Thousands of small watershed drain into progressively larger watersheds in Michigan until eventually draining through the St Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean.

But what makes watersheds so important? It turns out that our everyday actions have a direct impact on the health of the watershed in which we live. As rain water or snow melt moves across the surface of the land, it will pick up potential pollutants and carry them into nearby waterbodies like a stream, river or lake. These pollutants, called non-point source pollutants can include things like lawn and agriculture fertilizers, domestic animal waste, leaked or spilled automotive fluids, loose soil from construction or farming and more. These pollutants may harm or kill aquatic life, reduce the beauty of the natural resources and impair waters to the point that they must be closed to fishing and swimming.

Protecting the land and preventing non-point source pollution in Michigan is critical to maintain water quality and quantity for both human use and aquatic life. Thankfully there are many simple ways to do just that, including picking up domestic pet waste, preventing over fertilization of lawns and gardens and managing stormwater runoff. Check out the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's stormwater run-off page to learn more at

https://www.watershedcouncil.org/storm water-runoff.html.

And, for those of us that are fortunate enough to live near a lake, the Michigan Shoreland Stewards program is an excellent tool to learn how to protect the water bodies that we love. The Michigan Shoreland Stewards program is a voluntary web-based survey that asks property owners about their management practices on their entire property. The property is broken down into four main areas: the upland, the buffer, the shoreline and the lake. These survey questions are designed to help the property owner better understand how their practices impact the health of the lake.

To take the survey go to

mishorelandstewards.org

No matter where we live we are in a watershed and these watersheds are full of life. They provide habitat for fish, birds and wildlife , and they are where we live and play. The health of our watersheds is in our hands and it is so important that we take action to protect land and waters of Black Lake and Northern Michigan.

2021 DETROIT NEWS ICEBOAT RACES HELD ON BLACK LAKE IN JANUARY

Residents on Black Lake were quite surprised to wake up and see white sails moving around the lake. Most of us didn't know what was going on. Then we found out that the Detroit News North American Championship was being held here. It lasted for three days and caused a bit of excitement.

Participants in the iceboat races came from all over Michigan as well as surrounding states. There were 65 to 70 people taking part in these activities. No one knew where the races would be taking place ahead of time because it depends on which lake has the best ice. Scouts start looking for good ice about three days before the race. This year Black Lake fit the bill.

Every year there are two main regattas, one in North America and the other in Europe. This year, because of Covid-19 all events in Europe were cancelled, plus Canadians couldn't come across the boarder. This year it was sponsored by the Detroit News.

During the race the boats make several laps before they reach the finish line. Their speeds can reach 80+ miles per hour.

Photo credits go to
Susie Wickert Shampine.