

BLACK LAKE NEWS

SPRING 2024



The Black Lake Association was founded in 1928 by a group of volunteers focused on maintaining the quality of the lake and surrounding watershed, providing recreational opportunities and communicating information of interest to its members. That mission remains unchanged.

The purpose of the Black Lake Association is still to monitor Black lake for environmental and ecological changes and to promote activities that will enhance water quality, fishing, boating, safe navigation, swimming and other recreational activities. Membership in the BLACK LAKE ASSOCIATION is open not only to property owners, but also to others who want to support the quality, natural beauty and recreational opportunities of our northern Michigan gem. Everyone is welcome.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT BRETT TREPANIER 989-370-4949

Living in Northern Michigan means Mother Nature brings four seasons to their fullest. We have near perfect temperatures in the summer, beautiful fall colors, with hunting and fishing opportunities and ATV/Side by Side riding. We get cold temperatures and deep snow, filled with ice fishing, skiing, snow shoeing, snowmobiling and more. Spring feels amazing after frigid temperatures, plowing snow, long warm ups in vehicles. Hearing and seeing ducks and geese come back North, birds chirping and animals

waking up after a long winter of hibernation, all signal a new season begins. Truly, a one of a kind area. One where on February 27, 2024 it was 71 degrees and on February 28, it was snowing, with winds up to 35 MPH. Then on March 2, it was 55 degrees.

Last Fall was one of the rainiest Octobers we have ever had. Mother nature followed that up with a record setting, mild winter. Presque Isle County recorded a mere 52.75 inches of snow for the 2023-2024 winter season. Ice conditions were the worst I have

ever seen, not reaching more than nine inches on Black Lake, most of that being white ice, not the preferred black ice. White ice is weak, with large amounts of air within the crystalline structure. Black Ice is closely packed crystals with few impurities, and strong. Black lake, as of March fifth, has begun to reopen. I can't remember a time when ice was breaking up before the deadline in March for ice shanty removal. As Nature will sort itself out, I am excited to see what She has in store for Black Lake next.

CHANGES TO BLACK LAKE ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In January, the Board reluctantly accepted the resignation of long-time member Cindy Trepanier. Cindy provided over 20 years of active service to the Black Lake Association as a volunteer and board member, serving many roles including banquet chair, secretary and treasurer. She was a fixture at our board meetings, providing

thoughtful insight and guidance. Cindy was always willing to lend a hand when needed with our fund raising efforts. The Board wants to express its sincere appreciation for her many years of service and active leadership. We will miss working with Cindy. Nonetheless, we look forward to staying in touch for years to come. Upon Cindy's departure,

the Board selected and approved Brian Nadeau, Sr. to fill the vacancy. Brian is a relatively new member who has been active in attendance at many of our meetings, serves as a Beach Rep. and resides on Craig Acres Beach. We look forward to having Brian at the front table in future meetings to help guide BLA into the future.

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Marcella R. Domka Tip of the Mitt
Water Resources Manager



If you are interested in:

1. Learning about the causes of HABs in Black Lake
2. Providing HABs outreach/education
3. Preventing future algal blooms

Please email:

mdomka@watershedcouncil.org

to join the Harmful Algal Blooms Subcommittee.

“Algae” is an umbrella term for a large group of aquatic organisms with the ability to photosynthesize. The phrase “harmful Algal Blooms” (HABs) refers to algae growing excessively and releasing algal toxins, most commonly microcystins, into their aquatic habitat as they proliferate. In Michigan, most HABs are due to the abundance of blue-green algae or cyanobacteria.

HABs typically occur when there is an abundance of sunlight, nutrients and warm weather in a slow moving body of water, such as a lake or pond. While

HABs can happen naturally, it is often human activity that spurs bloom formation. Poor septic system management, introduction of invasive species and removal of shoreline vegetation can increase nutrient levels in a nearby body of water and make it more susceptible to HABs. In addition to this, farmers that allow irresponsible fertilization practices, as well as golf courses, homes or businesses that overapply fertilizers are additional sources of nutrient influx in waterbodies.

If you see suspicious looking algae, do NOT touch it –it is not possible to know for sure if an algal bloom is toxic without confirmed laboratory re-

sults. If you believe you have found a HAB, contact the Environmental Assistance Center at the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) at:

1-800-662-9278

Or email:

AgaeBloom@Michigan.gov.

We all care about our Michigan freshwaters and depend on them for drinking, recreation, aesthetics and countless ecosystem services. Thus preventing HABs in local bodies of water should be viewed as both a personal and community responsibility.

BLACK LAKE FISH COMMITTEE REPORT

ERIN MCLEAN BLA DIRECTOR

2023 was an exciting year for Black Lake. Not only did we receive 360,000 spring fingerling walleye this year (which brings our total stocked walleye, over the last 3 years, to almost 1 million), we also received 7,000 fall fingerling Great Lakes muskies to help boost a diminishing natural musky population. On October 30th and November 1st, the MDNR planted the 9” -10” muskies in the upper Black River Access Site by Black Lake and the former Black River Marina location on the lower

Black River. These muskies were hatched from the Detroit River strain and raised at the Wolf Lake Hatchery in southern Michigan. At the end of July, they were transferred to Thompson Hatchery in the U.P. where they were kept in ponds and fed fathead minnows to help finish growing till they were stocked in Black Lake. The MDNR raises approximately 40,000 muskies statewide per year. We were extremely fortunate to receive the amount of fish we did. We are slated to possibly get more muskies every other year

depending on the number of fish raised and the needs of other lakes that might have more of a need than Black Lake. It is important to know the difference between muskies and northern pike, especially with the new no-minimum length regulations for northern pike in Black Lake. These muskies could be easily confused for small northern pike and speared or caught and kept. We urge anglers to take a split second and make sure you know before you throw your spear or harvest fish before it's too late. We are working hard with MDNR to rebuild a reputable musky population like

we had a number of years ago. Any help from anglers would be greatly appreciated. We appreciated the work the MDNR (specifically Tim Cwalinski and Neal Godby) has put into the walleye and musky stocking over the years. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Sault Tribe for raising walleye for Black Lake. Any questions can be directed to Erin McLean at (989)-619-9146 or muskymclean@gmail.com



NEW BLACK LAKE WATER QUALITY MONITORING

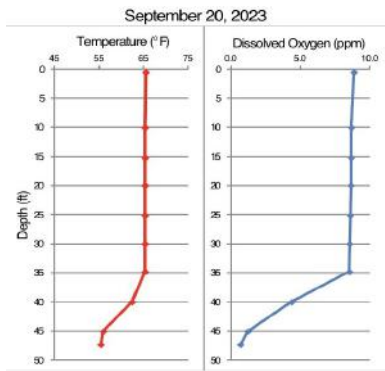
Dr. Roger Bergstedt
BLA Director

Following previous reports of harmful algal blooms later in the season than is typical, it was speculated that nutrients could build up below the summer temperature stratification under low oxygen conditions and be released in the fall when the stratification breaks down. Tip of the Mitt proposed several possible actions to address this possibility.

The one we adopted was "The Black Lake Association would buy their own set of equipment and conduct the monitoring on their own. The BLA and the Watershed Council will enter into a maintenance agreement to outline maintenance/storage requirements and ensure BLA protects their investments." We obtained a grant to cover half the equipment cost and purchased a YSI probe that simultaneously

measures depth, temperature and dissolved oxygen. We also purchased a sampler that can be lowered and take a water sample at specific depths for analysis of nutrients by Lake Superior State. The probe didn't arrive until August, but four profiles and sets of water samples were taken from mid August through early October—just after the break down of the summer temperature stratification. The graph from just before the breakdown, showing the type of information provided by the probe and how temperature and oxygen levels can drop in the deeper waters during the summer. On each of the four dates, water samples were also taken above and below the break in temperature to analyze for phosphorous and nitrogen concentrations. The results did show

that nutrients increased below the temperature stratification until the breakdown when the lake cooled in October when they became slightly higher in surface waters. Sampling through the summer will be more frequent in 2024. Assuming that results next year are similar, we are also attempting to estimate the volume of water in each 5-foot strata in Black Lake to better understand how that pattern could possibly explain late season HABs.



THE BLACK LAKE ASSOCIATION MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings are held in the Grant Township Hall on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm.

May 13th, 2024
General Meeting

Nomination of directors

June 10th, 2024
Annual Meeting

Potluck –Bring a dish to pass, drink and place setting.

Speaker TOM Staff
Septic Regulations

July 8th, 2024
General Meeting

August 12th, 2024
General Meeting

September 9th, 2024
General Meeting

October 14th, 2024
General Meeting



KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

MUSKELLUNGE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT 46"*

Muskellunge are light colored silver, green, or brown and usually have darker vertical bars or spots. There are many color variations of Muskellunge, but any markings are dark on a lighter background. The fins and tail of Muskellunge are pointed, unlike the Northern Pike which have rounded fins.

Barred Color Variation



Clear Color Variation



Spotted Color Variation



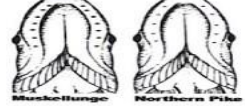
Hybrid Muskellunge (Tiger)



Dark markings on a light background, like a Pure Muskellunge. Rounded fins and tail, similar to Northern Pike.

Count the Pores

Muskellunge have 6-9 pores on one side of their lower jaw. Northern Pike have 5 or fewer



Northern Pike have light markings on a dark green background. The fins and tail on a Northern Pike are rounded, unlike the pointed fins and tail of the Muskellunge.



This sign is provided by Michigan Muskie Alliance in cooperation with the Michigan DNR Fisheries Division.



* Please see Michigan Fishing Guide for special season restrictions and minimum size limits for Muskellunge and Northern Pike. To view an electronic version of this sign please visit MichiganMuskieAlliance.org - Color illustrations by Veg Deck copyright 1986.

2023 FALL WALLEYE EVALUATION ON BLACK LAKE

NEAL GODBY, MDNR FISHERIES BIOLOGIST
TIM CWALINSKI, UNIT MANAGER



The Black Lake Association thanks all of their wonderful members and friends who have generously donated their time and energy as volunteers. Special thanks go out to all of the great Beach Representatives who willingly give of their time and energy every year.

Thank you also to all of the members who provide special donations for the fish fund, which we use for stocking fish and for food for the fish pond. Thank you to all the neighbors, friends and family who are committed to the preservation of our beautiful Black Lake.

A special thanks to Alexis Fink who chose to honor her parents with a donation to the BLA in their name.

GERDA AND BILL FINK



The following article can be viewed in its entirety on the Black Lake Association web page,

blacklakeassociation.com

We evaluate the strength of a walleye year class in Black Lake based on near-shore nighttime electrofishing sessions. Many historic stations were surveyed in the past with this gear, but the standard route has been approximately 7 1/2 miles from Five Mile point south and then east to the Rainy River mouth. This method is more useful for assessing juvenile walleye (age 0 and 1) than adults. It also can help determine stocking success, or wild walleye production in a year.

Black Lake walleye populations were reliant on natural recruitment prior to 2008. We have hypothesized that

zebra mussels have changed the nutrient dynamics in Black Lake over the recent two decades. This has been documented through water quality sampling results by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Plankton levels may have changed and are likely in lower supply for wild fry in Black Lake and other lakes infested with mussels. Spawning is not interrupted in the Black Lake system, but recruitment of wild fry to fingerling stage may likely be a bottleneck. The DNR and ITFAP, (Inter Tribal Fisheries Assessment Program) and Soo Tribe have stocked spring fingerlings (which are beyond reliance on eating Plankton) in Black Lake in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2014, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022 and 2023. Survival of these fingerlings has been acceptable based on first year (fall) sampling results

and angler reports as these cohorts mature. In addition, fall fingerlings were stocked by the BLA Association in multiple years, but survival of these fish has not been evaluated.

DNR and tribal partners, including Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians will continue to evaluate year class strength of walleye in Black Lake in the next decade. This may be done annually when possible, but may be completed in alternate years. Age -0 walleye catches in non-stocked years remains low. Future periodic stocking source should be State of Michigan spring fingerlings or Sault Tribe fingerlings. If possible, stocked walleye fingerlings should be OTC marked. Stocking probability will be based on walleye fingerlings availability in any given year and be need based.

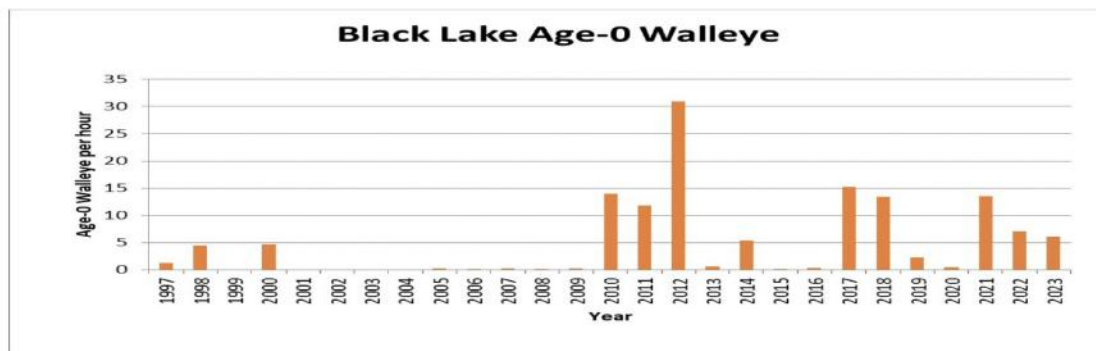


Figure 1. Graph illustrating strength of walleye year classes in Black Lake based on fall catch of age-0 in given years. Sampling was not conducted in 1999, 2001-2004. Spring fingerling walleye were stocked in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

FOND MEMORIES OF BLACK LAKE

DAVID BEYERLEIN



Thanks to all the volunteers in the Black Lake Association and for all the work you do to keep our lake in great condition for all to enjoy.

I have been coming up to Black Lake for some 60 years, first with my parents and four siblings, initially when I was eight years old. We rented from Wickerts on the east side of the lake for several years and then the Archambos on the west side of the lake for several more years. As us kids grew older, went to college, and eventually moved away from our parents, they no longer went up to the lake. However, all five kids managed to find their way back to "our lake". We stayed at the state park, pretty much taking over the lower level for our stay. We all have

fond memories of our time at the lake. We didn't even have to say Black Lake. Just saying "the lake", we all understood where we were referring to.

I never thought I'd ever buy a cottage, not during my lifetime. However, eight years ago, when I decided to semi-retire, I did the unthinkable. I bought a place on "the lake".

There was only one option on where we would purchase a place, that being Black Lake, our lake. The only decision was where on the lake, finally deciding on the west side. I thought I'd be disappointed in not being able to enjoy the sunsets looking across the lake. However, that disappointment didn't last long as the morning sunrises were nearly as

brilliant. One can sit out by a campfire and watch thousands and thousands of stars in the night sky. Or, watch the lightning display from a faraway storm (or nearby storm). Or watch the mist rise in the early morning. Or look across the lake at the fall colors. Yes, there are lots of fond memories of Black Lake. It's where I met my wife some 60 years ago. I think we were both eight years old at the time. She lived in Ohio and I lived in Michigan, so the only time we saw each other was vacationing at our lake. It is where years ago an aunt hooked a muskie. It broke her rod, leaving her holding a 12 inch pole as it swam away.

It's where I would go fishing with my dad, always catching walleyes. It's

where my son and grandson, all my children and grandchildren, came to ride the jet skis or snowmobiles, or just to relax around a campfire. And, it's where I nearly drowned 47 years ago. I don't remember much of the ambulance ride to the Cheboygan Hospital, but I do remember spending four days in the hospital and the concern about possible brain damage. The next couple of months of college were challenging, but thankfully all turned out okay. Counting my grandparents, there have been five generations enjoying our lake, hopefully the lake will be enjoyed by many generations to come.

Thanks again to all the volunteers and the work you do to maintain "our Lake".

★ GENERAL TIPS TO HELP KEEP GEESE OFF OF YOUR BEACH OR DOCK



Canadian Geese are beautiful birds, however that doesn't mean we want them on our beach. Here are a few tips to discourage their visits.

1. Allow weeds and grass

to grow on your waters edge. Geese don't like to walk through tall weeds, as they don't know what's behind them. They like to see where they are going.

2. Get a dog. Just make sure they don't hurt or catch the geese. This is one time you want your dog to bark. Geese don't like loud noise.

3. You may set up a decoy. It could be a plastic swan or dog. The geese may become familiar with these over time, and you will have to change them.

4. Do not feed the geese. It may be fun to throw them food, but it will keep them coming back.

5. Put up a flag pole. Geese don't like the fluttering and noise from a

flying flag.

6. Solar lights on your dock may deter geese from choosing to sleep on it over night. They don't like bright lights.

7. Geese don't like being sprayed with water, so having an operating sprinkler, or system near shore might deter them.

These are just a few helpful tips to try. ★



THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

canceled the 2024 lake sturgeon fishing season for the first time ever. Officials decided that the ice conditions were unsafe and they would not be able to enforce the harvest limit, however the **STURGEON SHIVAREE** endured.

The fishing season was cancelled, but the tent was set up and the other scheduled events, including live music, a poker run, exhibits, raffles and refreshments continued. **Jay Woiderski, President of Sturgeon for Tomorrow** was optimistic through it all. The attendance was down, but the live music and fun could still be heard all over Black Lake.



FRIENDS OF ONAWAY STATE PARK SUE MADDEN

The Friends of the Onaway State Park, (FOOSP) has had a busy year. We offered donuts and coffee to participants at the Shiverree for a donation, sold sweatshirts, and held a raffle for donated prizes. As spring came around, we weeded the native plant flower beds by the bathrooms in the park and added new mulch.

Summer campground hosts were needed as our long time family of Ted and Andrea Hand

have moved on to other adventures. We were able to fill the hosts positions and held many activities for the children. We had a very successful Harvest Fest thanks to the warm weather last fall.

The planned playground, in memory of Dr. Robert J. Schoenhals, is being held up by the Department of Natural Resources' focus on designating the American Rescue Plan Act money. It must be obligated to a specific use by the end of this

year and spent by the end of 2026. This has caused all other stewardship projects to be put aside for the time being. FOOSP believed we were ready to go with the playscape, but was then told there needs to be an archeological study done at the site of the pavilion before anything can be anchored to the ground. We are on the schedule for this to happen, although no specific time has been given. We realize this is frustrating for all involved, but there is little we can do.

ALVERNO, TOWER AND KLEBER DAM UPDATE TIFFANY HEON

BLACK RIVER LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

On February 2, 2024, Northwoods Hydropower, Inc (General Partner) and the limited partners of Tower Kleber LP and Black River LP, sold their partnership interests in TKLP and BRLP to Conifer Hydro, LLC. Notwithstanding this change in ownership, the operations and compliance staff will continue to work with Conifer in operating and maintaining the Tower, Kleber and Alverno Dams.

The Alverno license amendment process is still underway. After receiving further comments from the FERC in September 2023, BRLP revised its license amendment application and refiled. Consultation is presently underway with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office to confirm that no archaeological or historical resources would be affected by the license amendment.

The Tower and Kleber Dams upstream of Black Lake are currently going through the relicensing process. On November 14, 2023 a revised final license application was filed with the FERC. On December 6, 2023 a tribal consultation site visit and meeting was held for FERC to listen to comments and concerns of several Michigan tribe members regarding cultural resources. More comments may be solicited. The process is ongoing.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT UPDATE

LAUREN DEY, TIP OF THE MITT

It's the start of a new and busy year for us here at the Watershed Council. We were awarded funding through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, to complete a Watershed management Plan for the Black Lake Watershed. The plan captures the nonpoint source pollution related threats in the watershed, things such as erosion and stormwater, to prioritize restoration and protection actions within the Watershed. Water quality remains high and we want to keep it that way!

You may remember that we are working with a group of Master's students from the University of Michigan's School of Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) to gath-

er and assess much of the data that will feed directly into the plan. In August of 2023, they collected data on urban stormwater, streambank erosion, road/stream crossings, agricultural activity and forestry management. They are currently in the process of assessing the data and will have their results complete in time for their project symposium in April. In addition to the resource inventories that the SEAS students are working on, the Watershed Council will be conducting sampling on various tributaries in the Watershed along with our routine monitoring. Another important component of this process will involve reaching out to local governments to learn more about current

water quality protections that may currently exist, as well as what they are receptive to improving. To help us develop a watershed management plan, the Watershed Council is facilitating the Black Lake Watershed Advisory Committee, comprised of various stakeholders, including the Black Lake Association, to strengthen partnerships as the management plan is developed and implemented. We need your help and input as we review Watershed information and develop goals and objectives as well as implementation tasks. These meetings are also a great opportunity to receive project updates, not only from us, but from our partners as well. Stay tuned.



BURT LAKE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

has invited the BLA to join them and other associations in requesting the Natural Resource Commission to move the Bass season opening date back to the third Saturday in June.

In 2015 the DNR approved a proposal which essentially allowed year-round fishing for Bass under the premise of "catch and release, referred to as CIR.

Bass begin the spawning process around mid-May. The female clears a circle, fanning the lake bottom with her tail, removing unwanted sediments. Once she lays her eggs, the male fertilizes and then guards the nest for several weeks until the fry can make it on their own. With modern electronics, anglers can see these nests, and they work them until the male takes the bait. During the time the Bass is caught, is registered and is released, the predators move in and eat the fry.

The DNR classifies the Inland Waterway as world class, but little Bass seem to be disappearing. For this reason the BLA has decided to join the BLPA in their initiative.



WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING LOCAL BUSINESSES AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2023

Black Lake Sportsman's Club
Carquest of Onaway
Citizen's National Bank
Manzana's
Onaway Custom Embroidery
Onaway Outfitters

Prow's Auto Repair
The 211 Outpost
Twin Lakes Grocery
Brian's Auto Sales
M-211 Bar and Grill
North Allis Township

Onaway Lumber
Painter Petroleum
Red Oak Gunsmithing
Tom's Family Market
Wood Winds Restaurant
Chagnon Funeral Home

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS****PRESIDENT**

Brett Trepanier
989-370-4949

VICE-PRESIDENT

Roger Selvig
989-329-7882

TREASURER/SECRETARY

Dave Turzewski
517-881-3995

MEMBERSHIP/NEWSLETTER

Sharon Dulak
989-733-2565

AT LARGE

Roger Bergstedt
989-733-8337

Ron Dulak
989-733-2565

Erin McLean
989-619-9146

John Roby
989-245-7204
Brian Nadeau, Sr.
231-420-8183

**SUPPORT STAFF
LAKE MONITORING**

Roger Bergstedt

WEBSITE

Linda Van Sickle

BLA MERCHANDISE

Connie Nadjarian
248-561-7174

BUOYS

Jim Coleman

**FACEBOOK—BLACK LAKE CHE-
BOYGAN**

Jim Filipowski

BLACK RIVER BOATING ACCESS SITE

KEVIN TAYLOR , UNIT MANAGER DNR

The Black River Boating Access Site continues to see increased public use. It's location near the North end of Black Lake provides a second improved boat launch allowing easy access to the lake. The site has become more popular as public awareness increases. It both alleviates overuse and crowding at Onaway State Park and is a more convenient launch option for many Cheboygan County residents enjoying fishing or recreational boating on Black Lake.

The removal of the old marina dock structure and fuel dispenser system along the riverbank has allowed the shoreline to heal and re-naturalize as intended. Contaminated soils have been removed from the site to a depth of 24". Sub-surface contamination levels will be removed along with existing structures during further re-development of the site. The 2022 public input opportunity and conceptual design sharing for the site was a success. Design work, permitting

and contract documents are nearly complete as preparation for construction moves forward. However, while funding was requested for construction and further re-development of the site, it was not approved for 2024. The Black River Boating Access Site remains a high priority for the Parks and Recreation Division. It will continue to be stratified with other funding needs, both in this district and statewide and requested again for agency funding during the upcoming 2025 annual request.

ZERO GRAVITY ARIEL SURVEY

DENNIS WIAND



August 2023 Zero Gravity Ariel conducted a shoreline survey for the Black Lake Association. The results from the analysis will be presented to the Board in March 2024 by Ron Reimink of Fresh Water Solutions. The following information may be useful to understand the importance of gathering data for lake management.

A shoreline survey is a high-resolution video that records the near shore area of the entire perimeter of the lake. The first is a low altitude view of the entire shoreline from 25 to 40 feet in the air of the near

shore area of land and water. The second is a high altitude visual record created for the sandy shoals which includes aquatic gardens throughout the lake. The collected visual data is analyzed and a rating of best management practices is produced.

This survey is a valuable tool to generate statistical data for the use of education and environmental planning , and also to create a historical record of the lake environment. This information gives an accurate view of the near shore conditions such as green belts, natural shoreline, lake water

irrigation, seawalls, beach sanding, rip-rap, drain pipes, detectable algal growth, erosion, inlets and terrestrial invasives.

All of this information can be used to help guide the development of best management practices for the community, to work with local government to irradiate bad trends and to reinforce friendly ordinances. It also provides a historical baseline and increases in value when used for comparison in any future shoreline surveys . It is the most accurate way to prioritize and set goals.