

TLA QUARTERLY

June 2004

President's Letter

Springtime greetings to all,

It is heartwarming to experience spring, especially in northern Michigan after a long and snowy winter. Most of our board members who live in the southern climes during winter have now returned to Bellaire. We look forward to seeing them and working to accomplish goals we set together for Three Lakes Association. The following list includes areas of concentration for TLA efforts this summer and beyond. Read about them in more detail in the newsletter articles that follow.

- Tim Hannert and Dean Branson have informed the board that MDEQ has approved their grant application for computer predictive modeling of the chain of lakes starting with Torch.
- Brent Nelson, at Shanty Creek, tells me that dredging of the settling ponds at the base of the hill on M88 will be accomplished in the very near future. This will significantly reduce the amount of silt and debris entering Lake Bellaire during storm run-off from the Legend golf course.
- Your board will begin an intensive effort to increase TLA membership roles this summer. Please help by encouraging friends, neighbors and family members to join.
- We are embarking on our own water quality monitoring program after a group of us attended an instructional session at Boyne Mountain sponsored by Michigan Lakes and Streams Association. We will be monitoring clarity, phosphorus, chlorophyll A, and dissolved oxygen on all three lakes on a regular basis.
- Keep **June 23rd** and **August 18th** open, as TLA will be hosting shoreline stewardship and water quality educational programs respectively.

If you have issues or concerns, please feel free to contact me and I will make every effort to address them with the help of our TLA board. Have a great summer season.

Dick Garcia

Membership Drive

Last year Three Lakes ended the year with 390 members. Of this number 65 % were riparian landowners, yet of all the riparian owners on Clam, Bellaire, and Torch Lakes we represent 12% of the total. To the membership committee these numbers mean we need to do a better job at attracting everyone to our ranks.

We have set a goal of 425 members for 2004 and have initiated a plan to see that this goal is met. To this end we have sent letters to all riparians, reviewing the many exciting programs Three Lakes has to offer. So far we attracted 32 new members from the letter. Brochures are now available to interested parties at local businesses and government

agencies throughout County. New zone director materials are being used to track membership renewals and to encourage new memberships. A one-year free membership is being offered to new land purchasers through local real estate offices. We will continue to work hard to accomplish our number one priority, increased membership.

You can help! There are still many of our last year's members who have not renewed their memberships. **Please renew your dues for 2004**, remind others to do the same, and encourage friends, neighbors, and associates to join the ranks of The Three Lakes Association. **It works for everyone!**

Alan Hickman, Membership Chair

Vice-President's Letter

Learning And Having Fun In The Summer!!

Three Lakes will continue its long tradition of providing learning opportunities for our members and neighbors again this summer. We have made some changes to make these events both more fun and informative. On the fun side, each event will have a social component so we can enjoy get to know each other better and have chances to discuss or ask questions about the evening's topic. On the informative side, we've partnered with Grass River Natural Area and Torch Lake Protection Alliance to increase our ability to put on even better programs. We hope you will find each program interesting and enjoyable. Please encourage friends or neighbors to attend.

On **June 23rd** from 3:30 until 6:00 PM there will be a 'Shoreline Soiree and Wine and Cheese Reception' held at the Shanty Creek Beach Club on Lake Bellaire. Pontoon boat tours of the lake will highlight a variety of approaches to shoreline protection and the benefits vs. tradeoffs of each. Each attendee family will also receive a free native Michigan plant to take home along with a lot of helpful 'getting started' information.

On **August 18th** from 3:30 until 6:00 PM the program will be 'Surface and Ground Water Activities and Information' with Wine and Cheese refreshments. This event will be held at the Clearwater Township Pavilion on Crystal Beach Road. We will have hands-on activities relating to water quality and a well-water tasting contest. Come see Dr. Bretz's amazing deep-sea remote TV camera designed to reveal the secrets of the bottom of Torch Lake. It should prove to be interesting and informative.

Networking To Support Boating Safety

Sheriff Johnson and Marine Officer Tilley have been working over the winter to find ways to improve boating safety. Three Lakes, as part of a Network of Chain of Lakes Associations has aided in this work. The Sheriff's Department published the overall results of their marine patrol activities

last year in the Antrim County News. These results indicated the County Marine patrol is stretched very thin. They cover over 175 miles of shoreline, and 50 square miles of surface area with an average of one officer on duty during the summer daylight hours. The Sheriff would like more resources. Shoreline residents in critical areas will be recruited this summer to help gather data to make a case for more financial resources from the County in 2005.

In an attempt to help educate boaters about their responsibilities in the key areas of boat speed, intoxication, indecent exposure and littering, the Sheriff will be placing some new signs at launch sites. Sheriff Johnson suggested that signs have been effective in the past for improving boating safety.

The Sheriff has sent a letter to all riparian landowners reminding them of some courtesy and legal issues the marine patrol has encountered in past summers. The letter covers such topics as, late night noise, careless PWC operation and fireworks. Three Lakes has supported this effort by helping pay for the mailing of these letters.

Ray Ludwa

Treasury Department

The Three Lakes Association is exempt from federal taxes under its status as a 501(c) (3) charitable organization. We qualify for this status because we engage in charitable, educational, and scientific activities for the public good. However, there are also activities in which we must not engage. Specifically, we must not influence legislation as a substantial part of our activities nor participate in campaign activities for or against political candidates. Recently, several candidates have requested an audience at our board meetings to make a statement about their political plans. We cannot allow this. Even if we allowed both sides of a political campaign to speak to us, we would be endangering our tax-exempt status. We cannot, as an organization, endorse a candidate or participate in a political campaign.

We can and should advocate for clean water, safe boating, elimination of invasive species, and other policies that fit under our charter. Of course, individual members may participate in political campaigns and advocate for particular candidates. However, we must be careful not to involve Three Lakes in these activities. Three Lakes cannot and will not endorse any candidates at all, even if these candidates advocate positions that we are promoting.

So, as the political campaigns focus toward the elections in November, Three Lakes will not be involved. We hope that our goals and activities can be supported by a broad spectrum of political thought and that our work is truly in the best public interest. We welcome your support but strongly resist political advocacy.

Support for the Water Quality Model Grant

The good news is that we have received a grant from the Michigan DEQ for developing a

water quality model for our three lakes. The bad news is that we will be required to purchase a few water quality instruments to develop and calibrate the model, and we have to do this soon. Unfortunately, we did not know about these items when we put together this year's budget, and there have been other expenses that cannot be deferred. It will be difficult to squeeze these items into our plans. Specifically, we need to purchase a dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature meter and some flow gauges. We had hoped that the engineering firm with which we will be working, GLEC, of Traverse City would supply these items as part of our agreement, but this is not the case. We have found an instrument which satisfies our needs and which can sample the full depth of Torch Lake for approximately \$4,500 and we will need several flow gauges at????? each. We need an angel. Can you help us out? Please call the office at 533-4852 if you can help.

Norton Bretz, Treasurer

Executive Director's Corner

Grant Award

The biggest news of the year has been the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's grant award of \$62,000 to support the development of a nutrient-based predictive water quality model for our watershed. This \$90,000 project represents a unique collaboration between TLA, the DEQ, and the eight townships surrounding Torch, Clam and Bellaire Lakes. We have received tremendous support from Northwest Michigan College-Water Studies Institute, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, Helena, Forest Home, Milton, Kearney, Custer, Torch Lake, and Central Lake townships. Each partner has committed significant funds or in-kind services to accomplish our goal.

Phase 1(Torch Lake phase) of this project will be underway by the time you read this newsletter and should be completed by the fall of 2005. Phase 2 (Clam and Bellaire phase) should begin in June 2006 and be completed by the fall of 2007. Phase 3 (the remaining 11 lakes of our watershed) should begin in June 2008 and be completed by the fall of 2009.

Each phase will result in an analysis of phosphorus loading for the respective lake(s) and a computer interface that will allow 'what if...' questions to be answered. For example, one of our partners, Helena Township, is interested in a new village sewer system. This water quality model will provide an evaluation of this project and could supply important evidence for the township's grant applications. Milton Township, another partner, is considering an ordinance requiring septic inspection on sale of a home. This model can provide an analysis for this effort.

The overarching goal of this huge undertaking is to couple the maintenance of the environmental qualities we all cherish with the necessary economic growth that will provide family-sustaining employment for Antrim County residents. Dean Branson, WQ model project manager, continues to provide excellent leadership for this enormous project.

Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP)

Duane Drake's team of volunteer monitors has been out on our lakes collecting phosphorus and chlorophyll samples and recording clarity and oxygen data for this year's monitoring program. Duane and Dick Garcia are monitoring Lake Bellaire, Art Hoadley is working on Clam Lake, and Dean Branson, Norton Bretz, Bill Westerman, Jinks Ross, and Dave Reck are working on Torch Lake. Please tell your friends and neighbors that TLA has resumed direct responsibility for the water quality monitoring of our lakes and take the time to thank the volunteers for their contributions to our water quality database.

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Programs

Aggressive treatment for the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil begins this month. TLA, in partnership with Helena Township, Butch's Marina, and Torch Lake Protection Alliance, has contracted with Professional Lake Management, Inc. for the application of the herbicide 'Renovate' in two locations. The Alden Harbor and Butch's Marina contain pioneer colonies of milfoil and we hope to eradicate them this summer. We have, according to state law, notified property owner's living within a 100ft of the treatment area about the treatment process and it's timeline.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has issued TLA a special use permit allowing us to power wash boats and trailers at DNR launch sites located on Torch, Clam, and Bellaire Lakes. We will also be washing boats at the Alden Harbor and distributing ANS literature to boaters. We are looking for a program coordinator. The coordinator's duties will be to build and schedule the teams of boat-wash volunteers. The coordinator will need many volunteers to help this summer. Please call the office at 533-4852 if you can spare a few hours.

Governor Granholm has declared June 7-13, 2004 as the second annual Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week in an effort to inform citizens about the negative impacts caused by invasive species and the importance of preventing future invasions and spread. The next threat is an aquatic plant even more aggressive than watermilfoil. Its name is Hydrilla. It has not been spotted in the Great Lakes basin yet, but where it does occur (Maine, Connecticut, Washington) it crowds out Eurasian watermilfoil. Our boat washing program is quite timely.

Summer Intern Programs

We are offering two community service intern programs this summer. One group of students from Elk Rapids High School will be collecting field data for the water quality predictive model with Dean Branson. The second group will be updating a 1998 shoreline algae survey of our three lakes trying to locate colonies of the filamentous green Cladophora. This alga is an indicator of added nutrients such as phosphorus or nitrogen. It will be the survey team's job to analyze the data and work with the landowner to

correct any controllable nutrient sources. The students and their supervisors will be kayaking the entire shoreline of Torch, Clam and Bellaire Lakes, over the course of the summer, Tuesdays from 8am to 2pm.

We will need many adult supervisors again this summer to work with the students. Technical knowledge is not required, just enthusiasm and energy. Please call the office at 533-4852 if you can help.

TCE Plume Community Meeting

Antrim County United Through Ecology (ACUTE) and Michigan State University's Technical Outreach Service for Communities (TOSC) invites you to a community meeting about the trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination in the groundwater from Mancelona to the Cedar River. The meeting will give you a chance to ask questions of officials and experts who are investigating this problem and to learn about new possibilities for remediation of the plume.

When: Wednesday, June 16, 2004 – 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Where: Shanty Creek Lodge Summit Room A

Presenters: Gary Knapp, ACUTE Facilitator

Bob Wagner, Michigan DEQ

Tom Voice, MSU-TOSC Program

Patty O'Donnell, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

Moderator: Dick Garcia

For more information contact:

Gary Knapp at 231-587-5044 or Kirk Riley at 1-800-490-3890

TLA Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held August 27th, 7pm to 9pm at the Bellaire Senior Center, 308 Cayuga. Please mark that date on your calendar now. We will have an informative speaker, a brief business meeting, and a light dessert. The 2004 TLA Membership Directory will be distributed at the meeting.

Hope to see you out on the water this summer.

Tim Hannert