

TLA QUARTERLY
March 2005

President's Letter

Spring is here, March Madness is upon us and Three Lakes Association is alive and well. We are gratified to see the membership numbers dramatically up compared to last year at this time and hope that our goal of 450 members will soon be reached. An exciting and productive summer season awaits us.

Please keep Saturday, **June 11th** open for the 2nd annual Grass River/ Three Lakes golf outing at Hawk's Eye Golf Club. A day of golf will be followed by a fine meal along with prizes and a raffle. Last year was great fun so make a foursome and send in your reservation. Details will be sent in the near future and will appear in the local newspapers and businesses.

Two fine educational events are planned for the summer. The first will be held on Wednesday, **June 15** and will be a pontoon cruise on Torch Lake. The theme will be "Fishing for Answers", all about fish and fishing. The second event will be held on **August 17** with the theme "Predicting Water Quality". Our annual meeting will be Wednesday, **July 20th** at Hannert's farm on Stover Rd. A pig roast and square dancing will follow a short business meeting. Make every effort to attend and bring a friend.

Please jot these dates and events on your calendar now. Thank you.

Dick Garcia

Torch Lake Gives Up More Secrets

(Photo Identification: (L to R) Norton Bretz, Corey Arsnoe, and Dean Branson.
Photo Credit: Tim Hannert)

On a recent, blustery, winter's day a team of Three Lakes Association researchers carefully walked a half of a mile out to the middle of Torch Lake to measure and record oxygen levels from the top to the bottom, 260 feet down. No one has had the capability to do this until Three Lakes invested almost \$5,000 in an oxygen meter with a 300-foot cable. Norton Bretz, Three Lakes Association Instrument Specialist, lead the team out to the sampling site. He carefully chopped small holes in the ice every 100 feet to check the thickness while those following held onto the rope tied around his waist from the safety of a thirty-foot distance. Team members were relieved when Bretz reported six-inch thick ice all the way to the sampling site.

"It is critical to know the amount of oxygen at the bottom of the lake during the winter" said Dean Branson, Water Quality Model Project Leader, when asked why take such risks and endure such bitter cold. "If the oxygen gets too low at the bottom of a lake

nutrients like phosphorus come out of the sediment into the water. This fertilizes the lake and that causes problems with water quality.”

The oxygen meter indicated 80% oxygen saturation at the bottom of the lake. While this is slightly lower than the 100% summer levels it was far from the critical lower limit of 16%. This information is required for the construction of the Torch Lake Predictive Water Quality Model. “We expect Phase 1 of the model to be ready for demonstration by November, 2005” said Tim Hannert, Three Lakes Association’s Executive Director. “We will sponsor a training workshop at the Northwest Michigan College Water Studies Institute for our eight township partners, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and anybody interested in learning about this decision-making tool.”

If you are interested in helping with the all-season field work for this predictive model call the Three Lakes Association at 533-4852.



Annual Meeting and Pig Roast: Wednesday, July 20th

This year’s annual meeting should be good old fashion fun. We’re planning a pig roast at Hannert’s farm on Stover Road, just east of Bellaire. There will be a short business meeting at 5:00 preceding the dinner, and after dinner, a genuine barn dance. A caller will be on hand to teach us how to square and line dance. The menu is slow-roasted pork, baked beans, tossed salad, homemade applesauce, dessert and your choice of 2 beverages. We’ll have beer, wine, ice tea and soda on hand. All this for only \$20 per person, and you’ll have the time of your life!!

Plan to get a group of friends together and join us for the fun.

See the reservation form in this newsletter. We need paid reservations by July 5th

Cedar River Project:

The Cedar River is one of Antrim County’s “Class A” trout streams and is a major tributary for the Intermediate River that flows into Lake Bellaire. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has informed us that a small portion of the toxic TCE plume from Mancelona has entered the Cedar near Schuss Mountain Road. Three Lakes Association, in collaboration with the Bellaire Schools and the Friends of the

Cedar River, will be monitoring the effects of the TCE on the macro-invertebrate population of this river. If you would like to help with this project, we need sampling net builders, friendly adult mentors, squiggly-bug identifiers, and general schleppers. Call the TLA office at 533-4852 to offer your help.

Antrim County Marine Education (ACME):

Sheriff Johnson is having a series of training classes on Marine Safety and Law. Sessions will include marine safety, marine law, riparian rights, practical limitations, and citizen action.

Date: April 4th, April 11th, and April 18th

Time: 6:00 TO 9:00 PM

Where: Helena Township Hall In Alden

To sign up call; **533-8627, Extension 1**

What Will Happen After I Complete Training?

You will: Receive a graduation certificate if you attend all 3 sessions. Dispatchers will also put your name on their list of 'knowledgeable' resources. You will be recognized as a supporter of law enforcement. You will be expected to educate your neighbors if they complain about what is a true violation.

You will not: Be expected to confront anyone for illegal behavior, patrol in a boat, do any law enforcement work.

Anticipated Benefits: More people will know the facts about marine law, courtesy and law enforcement responsibilities. Reports of violations to law enforcement will be more accurate and more actionable for enforcement. Less marine patrol time will be spent chasing down erroneous reports, leaving more time to deal with real issues.

Predictive Water Quality Model Project: Clam Lake and Lake Bellaire:

TLA will submit a \$90,000 grant application to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality this spring to continue our predictive water quality model construction for Clam Lake and Lake Bellaire. This phase of the modeling project will feature several new aspects. For the first time TLA will be collaborating with the Antrim Conservation District for many fieldwork tasks. Long time TLA water quality monitor, Bob Kollin has generously volunteered to co-manage the fieldwork with the ACD's Corey Arsnoe. In addition, our major sub-contractor, Great Lakes Environmental Center, will expand the basic lake modeling to include watershed modeling for all three lakes. Finally, acting as another sub-contractor, Tina Norris Fields will construct a restricted-use website for data management system she designed. This website will be hosted, pro bono, by Chain of Lakes Internet. We are anticipating a very busy year with two modeling projects running concurrently. If you would like to help with either the Torch

Lake Project or the Clam Lake, Lake Bellaire Project please phone the TLA office at (231) 533-4852 to volunteer.

Michigan Lake and Stream Association's 44th Annual Conference:

The 2005 MLSA conference will be held at the Boyne Mountain Resort, April 22 – 24. Topics will include; learning how to perform routine lake monitoring, the development of nutrient criteria for lakes, protecting lakes and streams through township zoning, and a look at the newly reunified Crystal Lake and Watershed Association. Registration fees for one day are \$35 and for the full conference, \$65, payable to the MLSA Conference, P.O. Box 303, Long Lake, MI 48743. More information is available by phoning (989) 257-3583 or emailing Pearl Bonnell at pbonnell@mlsa.org

Executive Director's Corner

The chickadees have been drinking sap from the maple trees for the past week and seem to respond to this spring tonic by performing aerial acrobatics and looking for nesting sites. My modest sugar bush is producing about 20-30 gallons of sap each day and that will boil down to about two quarts of syrup. This ancient spring ritual signals the end of winter and the beginning of a new season for Three Lakes Association.

I'm looking forward to a very busy year of water quality monitoring and predictive model construction. We should have a full compliment of students working with us on these projects and could use several adults to serve as chaperones. If you'd like to help with any of our projects or events please call the TLA office at 231-533-4852.

We have 350 regular and life members as of March 31, 2005. This is an amazing number because as of December 31, 2004 we had only 320. Our 2005 goal is 450 members. If you can convince your friends and neighbors that TLA is serving them and they will get their money's worth with an investment of only \$50, we will reach our goal easily. Use the enclosed membership form to help them join in our efforts to preserve, protect, and improve the Chain-of-Lakes Watershed for all generations.

Hope to see you soon.

Tim Hannert