

Three Lakes Association
Annual Meeting August 20, 2015
President's Message

It's a great tradition, this coming together in fellowship, sharing a meal, and reflecting on something important we are doing with our short time together on this earth. Truly, it is amazing what we can accomplish when we combine our talents and abilities and work together. *Collaboration* is a grand word that comes to us straight out of Latin, meaning roughly *laboring together*. So, TOGETHER, we are striving to do great things. Let me list just a few of the projects and events that we have been working on this year, whether they are new or ongoing. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Summer Internship Program - launched in 2003, having provided environmental education in a fun setting to at least 55 young people in its twelve years. We know that some of our interns have gone on into environmental studies and careers, while others simply carry with them the lifelong lessons of stewardship and environmental responsibility modeled by TLA.
- Water Awareness Fair – launched in 2014, as a fundraising and educational event to support our Science Education Outreach Program (SEOP). The event grew a little bit more in 2015, and we hope to develop it into a major event in the coming years.
- SEOP Program - launched in 2008, providing supplementary funds to science teachers in our four school districts for projects and curricular materials that are a good match to our mission *to provide leadership to preserve, protect, and improve the environmental quality of the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed for all generations with emphasis on Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, Torch Lake and their tributaries.*
- Sandbar Fourth of July Water Quality Study – carried out this year, by four dedicated volunteers, and supported by both TLA and TLPA, in an effort to obtain water quality data that may be useful in developing community strategies to encourage the reasonable and respectful recreational uses of our precious water resources.
- Golden Brown Algae Study – in collaboration with academic scientists from both the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, we join in an effort to understand the causes of certain observable changes to our lake ecology over time.
- Large Woody Debris Project – launched in 2013, with seven sites on Grass River, appears to be having the positive effects we were hoping for, when we joined in to support Mark Stone's original proposal. As more sites are added to the project, we will continue to collaborate with this effort to remediate some of the negative changes that happen to rivers over time and with ongoing and increasing human activity.
- Antrim County Fair Participation – to bring useful environmental information to the public in a relaxed atmosphere, to invite members of the public to join TLA, and to give our interns a chance to practice their skills of public presentation.

- Benthic Barriers – part of our ongoing efforts to mitigate the negative effects of the aquatic invasive species, Eurasian Water Milfoil, we are experimenting with temporarily placing mats on the lake floor to deprive the invasive plants of the sunlight they need to grow.

As noted above, this is not an exhaustive list – one will easily think of other projects that didn't even get mentioned. Yet, this brief list gives the flavor of the always ongoing and collaborative work of the Three Lakes Association, as it pursues its mission in the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed.

We could still use a bunch more volunteers. It is not necessary to be a degreed scientist to volunteer with TLA. There are opportunities for every skill level and every talent. Whether one has many hours or only a few to donate; whether one can offer a boat for getting to water work sites, or a bucket to carry samples; whether one can make phone calls or appetizers – it doesn't matter. There is room for whatever skills, talents, materials, or time one has to offer. Come, join in the fun!

Thank you