

LAKE HELEN PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT
2021 QUARTERLY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
SATURDAY JULY 24, 2021 9:00 AM
AT 3060 E. LAKE HELEN DRIVE (BERSIE'S)

The Lake Helen P&R District Commissioners' meeting was called to order at 9:02 am
Commissioners Present: Tyne Hoffman, Keith Hoffman, Glen Bersie, Bill Pingel, Tom Gerlikovski (via zoom)
Commissioners Absent: Mildred Neville
Guests: Tracy Arnold (Planning & Zoning), Scott Provost (DNR), Fred Stoeger (Fish Committee), and Jesse Kuether (3050 E. Lake Helen)

➤ **LAKE MANAGEMENT**

● **BLUE GREEN ALGAE PROBLEM**

- Scott Provost went over the Blue Green Algae test results, also known as the microcystin test; the microcystin concentration was very high at 420 ug/L, the US EPA has set swimming advisory levels for microcystin at 8 ug/L. This concentration was very high because the sample was taken directly from the scum.
- No rapid test is available to test toxicity levels. Levels can change very fast due to weather factors. Swim and recreate at your own risk and do not swim or recreate in scum or water that you cannot see your feet in.
- The Blue Green Algae bloom was the perfect storm and perfect conditions, the algae is always present in the lake but when you add the heat, rising water temperatures, nitrogen, and phosphates it will form microcystin (toxic) levels.
- Many steps to take in making the lake healthy again: use the proper fertilizer without nitrogen, 35' no mow buffer zone, take advantage of the "native plant" plantings grant that Tracy Arnold can help with, do not mow right down to the water, take care of septic tanks and repair if needed, and keep animal waste out of the water. The less phosphorous and nitrogen reaching the water the less blooms.
- "KEEP IT OUT KEEP IT DEEP" per Scott it's his motto; meaning keep it out of the water and do make sure your prop is out deep before you take off stirring up the muck / sediment and stirring up the phosphorous & nitrates.
- The use of "THRUSTERS" can be illegal. They can be attached to docks horizontally to blow away weeds. But if they are aimed down to move sediment, this is a ticketed offense.
- The North, East, and West ends of the lake and extended beyond hwy 49 is where our water shed is located (ground water coming in to the lake.)
- Phosphorous levels in Lake Helen are generally low, well below the standard level. The last time those levels were high was after a Eurasian Water Milfoil treatment back in 2014.
- It has been recommended to NOT turn on the aerators. The low dissolved oxygen levels located at the bottom of the lake will come to the top and belch up phosphorous intensifying an algae bloom. It will potentially stress and or kill fish by bringing the dissolved oxygen levels up to the surface areas. Keith will find the aerator diffuser depth and we may possibly keep aerators on all summer long and possibly turn them on sooner.
- It was recommended that we do soil tests in random yards, including the ones that get fertilized and the ones that are not fertilized. Soil tests will measure the amount of phosphorous and nitrogen. Tracy stated that there are possible grants available, otherwise tests will need to be paid for out of pocket by the property owner. The Portage Count Extension can help to send the tests in.
- Tracy Arnold will be doing another shoreline survey. She noted that's it's been a few years since the last one.
- It was recommended to get in touch with Dr. McGinley from UWSP who did our Whole Lake study in 2007 to see if he had any additional input. Attached link will take you to study:
https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/programs/lakeleaders/crew8/kempstation_sept_2010/Helen%20Lake%20Final.pdf
- Commissioners were recommended to survey property owners to see if they fertilizing, how often, what is the number on the bag, etc.

- Scott stated that farmers will be regulated in the future with a “Nitrogen” standard regarding how much they can apply to the crops; this process will take a few years to go into effect.
- Scott recommended that we do monthly water tests for Nitrogen and Phosphates thru October. The Hoffman Family will do testing to measure Dissolved Oxygen levels, Saturation, and Temperatures up to 22’ deep by measuring every foot. Tracy Arnold provided the testing equipment for us to use.

- **INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL**

- **CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATER:** Tom provided an update that he received from Sam Coats, the Golden Sands water inspector, regarding the boat landing monitoring. It seems that the landing was very quiet with not as many boats going out as in last year.
- **EWM REMOVAL:** Glen and Tom noted that Eurasian Water Milfoil has been spotted in the shallow areas. The lake is too murky to see out in the deeper areas but it has been mapped out on GPS. EWM has been found out near the Unger’s and out past the Desai’s boat on the shoreline and a few other new locations.
 - Tom made a motion to authorize spending up to \$8,000.00 be used to hand pull with divers. Glen Seconded. All in Favor.

- **JAPANESE KNOTWEED:** Glen said the JKW is still present, with several showing up at one property that he treated to get them under control. The property owner at 3002 was contacted and knows that we are treating it and that they shouldn’t mow it, since mowing will help spread it.

- **FISH COMMITTEE:** Fred updated the group regarding a fish survey that had taken place one evening. No results have been received from that yet. He recommended to improve the habitats, fish sticks, improving fish regulations, shore line improvement, etc. We are looking at about 2 years out from fish stocking.
 - The Rosholt Blizzard Busters snowmobile club has not responded to Fred’s request for donations to Lake Helen. This club puts on the annual fisheree.
 - Tracy Arnold will follow-up to see if there will be any more grant money to drop trees this year for the fish sticks.

- **SWIMMING AREA:** Keith Hoffman, Bill Pingel, Tracy Arnold, and Ryan Rose (Portage County Parks Dept head) met at the Lake Helen County Park Beach Area to discuss some concerns that a property owner had. It was brought up at the Annual Meeting that swimmers are wandering too far out beyond swim area and almost getting hit by boaters and creating an unsafe action. Boaters must be operating at SLOW NO WAKE within 100’ of swim buoys. Keith was concerned about expanding the swim area by moving the swim buoys out further stating it would impede boating traffic. Ryan Rose recommended that the Lake Helen P&RD purchase small buoys on a rope to define the swim area; 100’ out on each side and 75’ in between. The estimated cost for the buoys was \$800.00. The Portage County Parks would store the buoys for us and put them out yearly.
 - Glen made a motion to purchase up to \$1000.00 for swim area buoys. Keith Seconded. All in Favor.

- **REGULAR REPORTS**

- June 4, 2021 meeting minutes reviewed. Glen made a motion to approve minutes. Tom Seconded. All in Favor.
- June 5, 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes reviewed. Glen made a motion to approve minutes. Tom Seconded. All in Favor.

- **TREASURER’S REPORT**

- Checking \$867.68
- Savings \$3,611.03
- Non Lapsable Fund (EWM) \$13,096.37
- Total \$17,575.08
- Glen Noted that we are waiting on receipts from Lisa Desai for the Run/Walk Event

- Glen noted that the Electric Bill has seemed a little on the high side and it is noted that a property owner was using an electric power source to operate the dock thruster. May 2021 – June 2021 411 kilowatts were used outside aerator times; Roughly \$50 - \$60 total. Bill and Glen will stop and talk to the property owner.
- A motion was made by Glen to purchase locks and lock the pump houses, shut off breakers, and lock gfi outlets located on the exterior of the pump house. Keith Seconded. All in Favor.

➤ **SELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- Tom Gerlikovski and Bill Pingel's terms expire in June 2022. Bill noted that he will not be running again. Glen made a motion that Bill be the official chairman until his term expires and Keith Hoffman be the "Co-Chairman" in training. Tyne Seconded. All in Favor.
- Glen would remain Treasurer and Tyne Secretary. Glen made a motion to approve. And Tyne Seconded. All in Favor.

➤ **ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOW-UP**

- Follow-up to the Annual Meeting regarding how it went. The sound system from Mike Ubl was great and worked out well. The Lake Helen County Park Shelter seems to be a good fit for the Annual Meetings.
- Bill noted that he set up the sign-in sheets incorrectly. We had those monitoring the tables check in the attendees. The property owners must actually sign in.
- Bill stated that prior to next year's meeting we should look at the specific state requirements for who is able to vote, including how a trust is supposed to be handled.

➤ **OLD BUSINESS:** (covered under the Lake Management Section)

➤ **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Keith discussed the signage down at the park and that we pursue something cleaner and neater down at the boat landing that clearly and simply states what the lake regulations and rules are.
- A commissioner discussed that we speak to the Village of Rosholt to discuss the direction of travel (counter clock-wise) on the lake be instated as an ordinance.

➤ **SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING**

- The next meeting will be held the 3rd week of October, date to be determined.
- Glen made a motion to adjourn. Keith Seconded. All in Favor.

Meeting adjourned 11:45am