



Portage, Base & Whitewood Owners Association

Serving the Lakes Community since 1940

Winter 2017 Newsletter

President's Message

By Mark Teicher

Your PBWOA Board was unhappy with the lack of progress with Washtenaw County and the Chain of Lakes Improvement Project. In many areas of the chain weeds were not removed or otherwise taken care of.

Therefore, we contacted the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner with our frustrations. They immediately responded and are taking some corrective measures. They met with us, took what we said seriously and scheduled a workshop which occurred on Oct 27. The workshop was televised and is available online on Hamburg Township TV using the link http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/drain_commissioner/dc_webPublicWorks/lake_management/chain-of-lakes-improvement-project/chain-of-lakes-improvement-project.

They have announced a type of sentinel or lake captain volunteer system to assist in spotting and alerting them to weeds and other lake troubles. They are working on updating, improving and moving forward. Check PBWOA.org and Washtenaw County's web site for updates.

Our membership is the largest ever. Thank you for joining and getting your friends and neighbors to join. Our rising numbers are extremely important.

MSU Extension Service has again offered their online class: "Introduction to Lakes". Several board members have taken it. We think so much of it that we want to do everything we can to use it to help educate our membership. Therefore, please sign up and take the class and if you pass (its pass/fail), then the PBWOA will reimburse you for the class fee. Please sign up at: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/introduction_to_lakes_online and let us know you are taking it. More details can be found in the article starting at the bottom of the right hand column on this page.

Watch for the December edition of *The Michigan*

Riparian - our Chain of Lakes and the PBWOA are the stars! Special thanks to board vice president Jon Waitz who was our editor in chief.

Congratulations to board member Craig Kivi on his completion and graduation from the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations / Michigan State University Leadership Training Institute

Thank you as always to all our very active board of directors.

The PBWOA Board

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How you can be better informed about your lakes – for free!

For several years now, Michigan State University Extension services has conducted an online program to increase your knowledge on lake ecology, shoreline and aquatic plant management, as well as Michigan water law. The PBWOA board feels this

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program has been useful to us in formulating projects to make our Chain of lakes a cleaner and more desirable place to live and recreate. In fact, emeritus board member Ron Esch from Whitewood lake said the following:

“Since becoming a Board Member of the PBWOA I felt I could become much more effective if I fully understood the intricacies of an effective lake management system and the critical elements of lake ecology, watersheds, laws, invasive species, etc. As I was looking for educational opportunities, I was made aware of this online Introduction to Lakes course through the MSU Extension Program.

I took this 6 week course and was absolutely impressed with the material and the presentation format. I learned a significant amount about lakes and waterways and all the different elements that affect them. I learned about the responsibilities of lake and river front property owners (Riparian’s) -- dos and don'ts, and how to become a good steward within the lake management system.

This program was not only beneficial to me as a PBWOA Board Member but I can see that it would be beneficial to any Riparian because they have a vested interest in the quality of our water and ultimately the property values of their homes.

The PBWOA board feels strongly that the more informed everyone is, the more the lake system will benefit from better practices. The next online course starts January 23rd. The price if you register before December 22, 2017 is \$95. After the 22nd the registration fee is \$115. 2017 is 95 After the 22nd the registration fee is \$115. **The PBWOA board feels so strongly about this program and it's importance that we will pay 100% of your enrollment fee. Please let a board member know of your interest and register at: [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/introduction to lakes online/registering for the course](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/introduction%20to%20lakes%20online/registering%20for%20the%20course).. Upon successful completion of the online program just show a board member your certificate and we will reimburse you.**

Remember, the more we all know and can share with our neighbors, the better our lakes will be.

Proposed 2018 timeline for the Chain of Lakes Improvement Project

Provided by Washtenaw County

Task / Responsible Party	2018																
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April 1-15	Apr 15-30	May 1-15	May 15-30	June 1-15	June 15-30	July 1-15	Aug 1-15	Aug 15-30	Sept 1-15	Sept 15-30	Oct 15-30	Nov	Dec
Implementation																	
Permit issued for 4 years good through 2020																	
Harvesting conducted on the river connecting base / Huron Weed Control									X			X					
*Conduct follow up surveys / Aquest								X	X	X	X	X					
Schedule applications / Aquest, Aquatic Services							X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
*Application to channels / Aquatic Services							X		X		X		X				
Set assesment amounts for Winter tax roll / BPW															X		
*Pre Treatment Survey / Aquatic Services						X											
*Treatment of Canals / Aquatic Services						X		X		X		X	X				
*Treatment of select waters (as determined from pre treatment survey) / Aquatic Services						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Education / Promotion / Reporting																	
**Twice weekly website updates / Jeff, Jon						X	X	X	X	X	X						
**Monthly website updates / Jeff, Jon						X	X	X	X				X		X	X	X
Reports / Mgt Opinions / Data Processing / Map Updates						X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X
Attendance at PBWOA meetings / Jeff, Jon						X						X			X		X
Lake Scan Workshop / Aquest, Jeff, Jon				X											X		X
Update to Lake Associations / Twps / Jeff, Jon				X		X		X		X			X				
*Subject to weather																	
** Includes survey reports, maps, any relevant information regarding the lake mgt project																	
*** Jeff Krcmarik 734-222-6865 , Jonathan Pelukas 734-222-3827																	

What's Happening with The Chain of Lakes Improvement Project?

The project has been extremely slow in getting started, much to the frustration of lake residents and the Office of the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner. There are a number of reasons for this delay.

1. This is the first time the DEQ received applications for whole lake treatments on these water bodies.

Prior to 2017 all permits issued within the project area were for portions of canals, shorelines, and channels. The request by Aquatic Services for a 4-year permit also required greater scrutiny by DEQ and by other outside agencies since DEQ cannot revise once the permit is issued.

2. Problem areas may require a "revision request" when outside the 5 ft. depth contour or greater than 300 ft. from shore. The revision request permit is additional permit that is a one-year permit. If DEQ does not allow the revision request permit, harvesting will be considered for those problem areas.
3. Since the municipal water intake for Ann Arbor is downstream, another condition is the notification to the Ann Arbor water treatment plant requiring a 7 day notice by Aquatic Services. This condition can be adjusted if the both parties, Aquatic Services and the City of Ann Arbor, agree on changing the notification condition. This condition is required of Portage, Little Portage, and Base Line lakes, other lakes may be required for similar notification. Permits issued for Loon, Tamarack, and Whitewood on August 11 did not have the 7 day notice requirement, however DEQ may include additional conditions on those permits.
4. Zukey, Strawberry, Base Line, and Portage cannot apply product controlling algae, copper products, before June 1 or after November 1 since the endangered cisco relies on algae as a food source. DEQ is checking with DNR Fisheries Department representative, Jeff Braunscheidel, to determine if this restriction affects canal and channel treatments. Existing permits did not have restrictions however we are seeking assurance that the treatment of canals will not be prohibited.
5. Zukey, Strawberry, Whitewood, and Portage contain endangered mussels and revisions of treatment maps have been requested from Aquatic Services.

These issues are being worked out and a 4-year permit for the project is expected by the first of the year. Meanwhile, areas for which permits were previously obtained by local groups have been treated in 2017, some several times. Those treatments have been paid for by Washtenaw County.

The proposed timeline for Chain of Lakes Improvement activities appears at the bottom of the previous page.

The Good News: Because of the delays in implementing the full project, the Board of Public Works has agreed to **reduce the first-year's assessment by 50%**.

Editor's note: The above was adapted with minor revisions from information obtained from the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's office.

PBWOA Online

Your association maintains several online sites to keep you informed;

Website: The PBWOA website (<http://pbwoa.org>) is updated frequently with information useful to waterfront owners. Check back often.

Facebook: We have recently added a Facebook group to highlight PBWOA activities. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/HuronRiverChainofLakes/>. "Like" and "Follow" the group. "Share" important items with your Facebook friends.

Email: If we have your email address we will occasionally send you important and timely information. We do not share your email addresses.

Seawalls – by Craig Kivi

A very common way to attempt to prevent shore erosion on the Portage Chain of Lakes has been for Riparians to construct vertical seawalls. The evolution of seawalls has been an interesting one. From pictures and discussions with older folks, it appears that in the early 30's there were very few, and perhaps then just a single row of rocks. Fast forward through the 50's when shorelines were covered with long, tall 45 degree rows of volleyball or basketball sized rocks, then concrete behemoth seawalls started showing up, through to our current vertical wood, steel, formed concrete or composite structures popular today.

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Some worked well, others didn't; almost all had drawbacks. With the increase in boat traffic, and more importantly size of boats, those who did nothing to their shorelines found them slowly disappearing due to wave erosion. The single row of rocks kept washing out into the lake. The concrete seawalls sometimes cracked, broke up in pieces, or tipped forward toward the lake. Even the vertical wood, steel, or formed concrete structures either rotted, rusted, cracked, or eventually tipped toward the lake and began falling apart.

So what have we noticed from all this? One thing is for sure - water always wins. May take a while, but water, especially wave energy, is an expert at breaking things down. All we can hope for is to slow it down for as long as possible. And, with all the different seawall configurations, throughout all my 58 years on the Portage Chain, I've seen all of them fail...with the exception of one.

So what happens when motorboat waves hit a seawall? Seems obvious, doesn't it? The waves stop, don't they? Well, not really. In fact, not at all, they are just re-directed. When a wave hits a vertical seawall, the wave energy splits, sending a portion of the wave downward and this washes the sand and gravel away from the bottom of the seawall, a phenomenon called "scouring". It washes away the front support of the seawall and causes your seawall to tilt out towards the lake. Worse, this leaning is the first step to causing the wall to start to split or crack. Soon the soils behind the seawall will begin to erode, and complete destruction is not long after. This is one reason your lawn can have "sink holes" behind the seawall. Scouring pulls the sand and gravel out from under, and from behind it. The wave energy is also directed sideways, that is, it travels all along the seawall, pounding whatever gets in its way, such as cracks, bows, or any irregularity in the seawall. This is called "flanking", and is most obvious at the end of the seawall where erosion can be quite obvious, and can wash the soils out from around the back of the ends of the wall as well.

So what's the solution? It's simpler than you think, and has many great side effects too. The most successful seawalls are those which regardless of construction are lined along the front with basketball sized non-sedimentary hard, round rocks such as granite, quartz, etc., on an approximate 45 degree angle. I'm not talking about vertically stacked rocks, which I have seen fail. In fact, a lifetime seawall can be constructed with just the 45 degree rock configuration alone, requiring minimal maintenance.

Why? Because rocks have been preventing erosion along shorelines for millions of years. They're experts at it. They dissipate both scouring and flanking wave energy. Waves simply break apart to nothing when they strike a rock seawall, as each round rock does its job in synergy with the next.



And while we're at it here, don't forget the option of "slotting" your seawall. There are companies who can remove a ten foot section of seawall or so, make a ramp from your lawn into the water, install a "benthic" fabric and cover with sand and finish off the seawall edges. This allows easy walk in access for multigenerational wading, in and out ease of water toys and docks, etc. It's a great option for some waterfront owners, enhancing their lake enjoyment significantly.

So what are the great side effects of rock lining a seawall? Well, for one, financial. Repair or replacement of your seawall may never become necessary, as it may never fail. The wave energy always is broken up by the rocks, never hits the vertical seawall, never gets a shot at it. Secondly, flat seawalls are wildlife deserts. There is absolutely no aquatic wildlife habitat whatsoever, they are dead zones. Lining a seawall with rocks creates a terrific ecosystem for aquatic insects, crayfish, small minnows, turtles, etc. Your new waterfront section of the lake returns to life, and your lake overall is healthier because of it. Other advantages include calmer and clearer water at your water's edge, and finally, beauty. Rock seawalls are gorgeous; I can't take my eyes off them. They look like they fit, and look like they have always been there.