Hardwood Lake Property Owners Association

www.hardwoodlake.org

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Fall 2016

The newsletter is in color on the website.

Paul Hausler of Progressive Engineering inspects the lake on July 15. At the July 2 public hearing Paul explained the current weed issues and plans for the next four years. See the story on page 2.

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For updated information click on *late breaking news* link on the **HOME** page

Lake Association update

It has been another trying summer with weed control.

As you may recall there was a shortfall in funding in 2015 and 2016 due to accounting issues in Richland Township.

In spite of that, we were able to get algae treatments in 2016 before the three summer holidays and one in mid-July

Starry stonewort, another invasive species has become a nuisance. It looks like a lake weed but is actually an algae. Eurasian milfoil, our original invasive weed, is under control following the whole lake treatment in 2015.

Starry stonewort was first found in 1983 in Michigan and is present in over half the counties in the southern Lower Peninsula

Lake treatment is funded by a special assessment district with funds collected in the winter property taxes. The special assessment is on a four-year cycle, so that the assessment can be adjusted as needed.

About 45 people attend the special assessment meeting

A special assessment hearing was held on July 2, 2016 at the Logan Township Hall. This was to determine funding for the four-year period of 2017 - 2020. There were about 45 members of the public present.

Paul Hausler of Progressive Engineering made a presentation on the continuing weed control project.

He has been with the lake board since 1994 overseeing the project. He hires contractors and ensures cost effective treatment of the lake which is governed by state statute.

2016 was the last year of the current four year program.

Paul explained that all lakes have different physical characteristics. Hardwood lake is 182 acres which is slightly larger than was originally estimated because of improved mapping procedures. It has a maximum depth of 35 feet with an average depth of 11.1 feet. The retention time for the water is 215 days and it drains approximately 4,110 acres.

"The lake is not a swimming pool" Paul said. "If you want swimming pool water buy a swimming pool."

The lake is controlled by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations and the lake is a natural eco-

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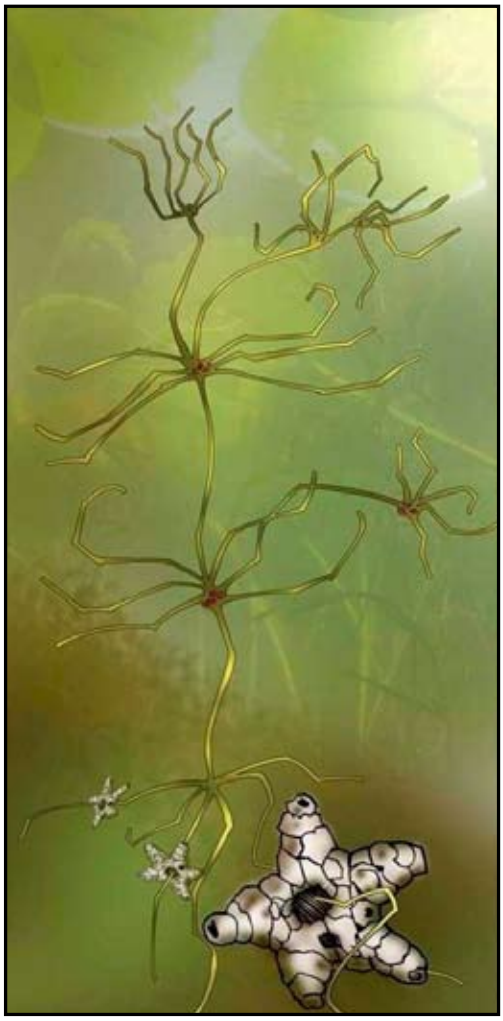
system. It needs to maintain a balance with natural native plants.

The original problem was Eurasian milfoil which is a non-native plant. It is in approximately 48 states and it grows profusely. It is not a good fish habitat and uses too much oxygen from the lake water.

Another invasive weed we are dealing with is curly leaf pondweed. An entire lake treatment was done in 2015 with Fluridone for milfoil and curly leaf pondweed.

Another plant we are seeing a problem with is starry stonewort which is a micro algae and is new in the last 2 to 3 years. It is very aggressive and will take over areas, including areas of lily pads and milfoil. It can grow in water 6 feet deep. There is some research underway with Central Michigan University and others on how to treat it. A new treatment may be coming.

We've always had an algae problem and continues to be a problem. It is in part what causes the brown color of the water. There have been new types of algae besides the starry stonewort showing up in the past 2-3 years. We are seeing more of it. The lake is a big nutrient source and causes the algae to grow. It is difficult to control and the DEQ has restrictions.



Starry Stonewort

We are seeing more filamentous algae. As it dies it decomposes which releases gas causing other algae to float causing the unsightly appearance on the water.

Aquatic herbicide treatments are used 2 to 4 times a year. Aquatic Services is the herbicide applicator. They use lake water and herbicides and mix them together depending on the purpose of the treatment.

Another method of treatment is mechanical harvesting. There was no harvesting in 2016 because of budget shortfalls. Mechanical harvesting removes biomass and slows the lake aging process. It is nonselective. It is not done near the wetlands areas - only harvesting where there are people. It has limited access near docks. They're very big machines and blow around in the wind. They can't get in the water that is less than 2 feet deep. No permit is required for harvesting.

We will also be looking into watershed mapping. There's a lot of algae and we need to determine the source of the water and where it is coming from. We will look at surface and ground water. It seems something in the watershed has changed over the years.

Some land uses higher phosphorus. Hay and pastures have little impact. Corn and the row crops have higher impact. This will take several years.

For the 2017-2020 proposal we will annually do a aquatic plant control at $20,500. This increase is partly due to the increase in starry stonewort. Administration will be $6,500 and the watershed mapping initiative, which is new this year, will be $3,500. The

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contingency will be $3,100 for a total of $33,600. By law the contingency fund has to be 10% to 15% of the project plan, that's why the big increase in contingency. Bottom line is we're increasing our annual expenditure from $26,000 to $33,600. The last four years (2013-2016) assessment role had surplus funds and we chose to spend them down. This year's funding will be: lake front properties one unit at $344, back-lots are considered one half units at $172.

This assessment for 2013-2016 was $185 for lake front lots and $92.50 for backlots..

The 2013 to 2016 program was budgeted at $18,250 annually which included herbicide treatment and weed harvesting which are regulated by DEQ. Administration cost was about $6,000 per year and the contingency fund $2,425. Total funding per year was approximately $26,675

For 2016 the plan is for aggressive treatment of the stonewort in the spring, continued treatment throughout the summer and weed harvesting.

Paul Hausler sprays down his boat at the boat launch after inspecting the lake. He does this to prevent the transfer of species and plants from one lake to another

Progressive AE

Starry stonewort, detail photo above. At right is one residents harvest of stonewort in about an hour.

Starry stonewort

By Tony Groves, Pam Tyning, and Paul Hausler Progressive AE

Starry stonewort (Nitellopsis obtusa) looks like a rooted plant but it is actually an algae. The plant is native to Europe and Asia and was first discovered in the St. Lawrence River in 1978.1 In 1983, it was found in the Detroit River near Belle Isle and has since infested several Michigan lakes.

Starry stonewort resembles the native aquatic plant Chara. Starry stonewort has tiny, star-shaped, tan-colored reproductive structures called “bulbils” that are firm to the touch when compared to its soft branches. The presence of bulbils is one way to distinguish between starry stonewort and Chara. Unlike Chara, which is generally considered to be a beneficial plant, starry stonewort has a tendency to colonize deeper water and can form dense mats several feet thick.

Starry stonewort can impede navigation and limit growth of more beneficial plants. Compared to many other aquatic plants, starry stonewort may begin growing later in the season and persist longer. It is unclear what effects starry stonewort may have on a lake’s fishery. The encroachment of starry stonewort into fish spawning beds may be a cause for concern. It is noted that starry stonewort may be a food source or shelter for bottom-dwelling and juvenile fish in fall and winter when other plants are absent.

Both algaecides and mechanical harvesting appear to be somewhat effective in controlling starry stonewort. Because it lacks roots, starry stonewort can be dislodged from the bottom without much difficulty.

http://www.michiganlakeinfo.com/Starry_Stonewort.html

• Its the law •

High speed boating hours 11 am - 7:30 pm

Local laws adopted by the State of Michigan allow high speed boating on Hardwood Lake between the hours of 11:00 am and 7:30 pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time.

High speed boating is defined as the boat being on plane.

DNR SPECIAL LOCAL
WATERCRAFT CONTROLS
DNR Administrative Rule R281.765.14
Adopted November 1, 1977

Looking for something to do?

Check out local area websites for current activities.

www.westbranch.com
www.tawas.com
www.ogemawherald.com
www.visitwestbranch.com

The sites are linked on
www.hardwoodlake.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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