

Van Etten Lake Association

Winter Newsletter

Keeping Members Informed and Involved



Board Members:

Pres- Ron Mathison statewideron@charter.net
Vice Pres- Carole Plunkey caroleplunkey@charter.net
Sec-Joe Plunkey joeplunkey@charter.net
Treas- Leonard Brockhahn sbrock50@gmail.com

Greg Cole- colescottages@gmail.com
Paul Rekowski - prekowski@yahoo.com
Janice Wilber- gjwilber55@yahoo.com
Tom James- peabody56@comcast.net
Larry Evans- larryann44@yahoo.com

Hello members of our lake association.

On behalf of the VELA Board I would like to wish you a Happy New Year. We are looking forward to 2011 and an improvement over the weedy issues that plagued our lake in 2010.

Wintertime is special around Oscoda as ice fishing has been good this winter with ice thickness not being an issue due to very cold temps. Numerous shanties dot the lake and reports of healthy catches of 6-7 inch perch are commonplace. Snowmobiling is in full swing now that mid-January has brought good quantities of snow.

We look with anticipation to the summer months and are encouraged by the plans of our weed committee. Encouraged because we have a new lake management company on board and they are committed to a more aggressive approach in dealing with the weeds. This new management company is Lake Pro Inc. of Schwartz Creek. You can learn about them at www.lakeproinc.com.

The weed committee and Lake Pro have formulated a battle plan and we are more prepared than the past few years to attack the issue early. We will be using multiple approaches including herbicide treatment, harvesting and weevil planting. I cannot promise you there will not be weeds but I can promise you we will be ready and diligent in dealing with them. Lets hope our efforts improve conditions in 2011.

Ron Mathison
President

Did You Know? The original court order to establish the lake levels occurred in 1944.

2011 Meeting Dates

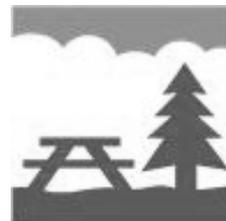
- April 28-PRVEL Watershed
- June 4-VELA Spring Mtg
- July 9 -VELA Annual Mtg
- July 28-PRVEL Watershed
- Sept 10-VELA Fall Mtg
- Oct 27-PRVEL Waters

All meetings are at 10 a.m.

Meetings located at:

- PRVEL at Greenbush Twp. Hall
- VELA at Oscoda Twp. Conf. Cntr.

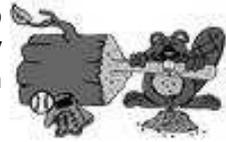
MARK YOUR CALENDAR



ANNUAL VAN ETTEN PICNIC
SATURDAY: AUGUST 6, 2011



DID YOU KNOW? It is illegal, not to mention very dangerous, to fish within 50 ft. of either side of the dam. Children are a special concern as they are naturally drawn to the water and need parental guidance to keep safe. Any questions regarding the dam? Please call the new dam operator Paul Merdzinski via his cell phone, 989-820-5130.



Phosphorus 101 & Michigan Legislation

Increased amounts of phosphorus in lakes is a problem because it causes unwanted algae blooms, excessive weed growth, decreased water quality thus impacting recreation, and negative impacts on fish, plants, and animal life. Phosphorus can enter a lake through lawn clippings/fallen tree leaves, waterfowl, run-off of cleaning materials and/or household products containing the nutrient, failing septic systems, and lawn fertilizers.

There has been a strong interest in eliminating phosphorus from fertilizers in our state, a land of thousands of inland lakes as well as the Great Lakes, and it appears that this is finally a reality.

In January, our Michigan legislature passed a bill limiting the application of phosphorus to turf lawns. Public Act 299 reads ... "Beginning January 1, 2012 except as provided in subsection 2, 3, 4, or 5 (read the entire bill to view these exceptions), a person shall not apply to turf a fertilizer labeled as containing the plant nutrient available phosphate.

We applaud this bill, supporting any action which helps to improve water quality in our lakes, fully aware that it is only part of the solution, but happy that the government finally saw the need for such legislation. Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and New York already have such a bill. We encourage all who are interested in knowing more to visit the Michigan Lakes and Streams website at mlswa.org to see the entire bill and/or read about other riparian issues.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Point-of-Sale Programs

In accordance with the association's goal to preserve and protect the lake, the board has been investigating the possibility of implementing a township ordinance which would require the inspection of onsite septic systems at the point of changing ownership to assess if they are working properly and/or are sufficient for the use intended. Non-compliant septs are a source of unwanted nutrients (mainly phosphorus) and other harmful effluents which can seep into the ground water and then to the lake. These inspections would benefit the property owner as well as the environment.

A sample ordinance from a nearby county was viewed and from this, a draft was made and submitted to the township for consideration. More and more state and local governments, especially those dealing with fragile watershed issues, are starting to view septic systems as part of the community wastewater infrastructure, albeit one that has been neglected in the past.

Many issues are involved with the initiation of such a program, and will take time to consider and develop, but the effort is well worth it, if it helps to keep our environment and our lake healthy.

<p>Martin Pontoon & Shrinkwrap <i>Dock Service & Storage</i></p> <p>Martin Gayeski</p> <p>321 Ottawa Drive Oscoda, MI 48750</p>		<p>989-739-2396 or 989-739-7933</p>
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	<p>André & Lawrence La Voie BEACHES * SEAWALLS LANDSCAPING</p> <p>WATERFRONT SERVICES * CONSULTING BEACHES * DECKS * BOAT HOISTS</p> <p>2984 WOLVERINE EAST TAWAS, MI 48730</p>	<p>(989) 305-1450 (989) 362-2758</p>
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Chara (muskgrass) – look familiar? This form of algae has a rather murky smell, gritty texture, and is easy to pull up from the sandy lake bottom. Makes a good hiding place for small fingerlings



Endowment Fund Continues to Grow

Current Fund Balance—\$9134.00.

Please consider an investment for the future of the lake. Brochures are available with more info. Contact Carole via email or call 739-8717.

Did You Know? Most dishwasher detergents still contain phosphates. Read labels to select products with the lowest level possible until better products are manufactured.

Weed Control – New Lake Management Firm

We again take this opportunity to thank all of you who showed your support of VELA's efforts to continue the special assessment of funds to enable on-going weed monitoring and control on our lake. The weed committee met with the lake management firms that responded to the request for bids and gave their recommendation to the township board, who later approved the firm Lake Pro, out of Swartz Creek, Michigan. They in turn signed a contract with the township for five years.

According to Larry Evans, the committee chairman, they met with the new team in December and discussed weed treatment methods, what has been done in the past on the lake, and what might work well in the future. Then, next Spring, when the lake temperature reaches 60 degrees, Lake Pro will conduct a full survey of the lake and make recommendations for a course of action based on those results. Any questions regarding this process or other issues regarding weed control may be directed to Larry or other members of the weed committee.

The monies in the Special Assessment District are managed by the Office of Economic Development and a copy of the spending for 2010 is available through their office.

In short, we start each year with about \$50,000 plus any balance left over from the previous year. This sounds like a huge amount until the figures start coming in for the cost of treatments, various permits, water testing, and payment to the management firm itself, and then the money goes out fairly steady until the end of the year. Every year will be different, because no one can predict what kind of action will need to be taken to control the weeds. Some years are better than others and some not so good – we've all been a witness to that. By the end of 2010, we still had about \$48,000 in the account, so when we add the new year's \$50,000, we will have about \$98,000 for this year's treatment needs.

**Bob & Linda Gregg
and
Stan & Lynn Faultersack**



GET CLEAN

1-800-327-1879
www.stanman.myshaklee.com or hiswaysf@i2k.com

Ron Mathison

Office: (989)739-2050
Fax: (989)739-2280
1-800-968-4408
Home: (989) 820-4817
E-mail: statewideron@charter.net



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335 S. State St., Suite A
Oscoda, MI 48750-9546

PRVEL Watershed News

Current projects and goals for the new year were discussed at the last meeting of the watershed group on at the Greenbush Township Hall. In brief, we will be looking to complete the four ARRA funded road/stream crossing renovations as managed by the Alcona City road commission, further develop a River Keepers program, schedule power-point presentations to get the word out about what the watershed is all about, begin another year of river/stream monitoring and collecting of data to determine areas of concern regarding water quality and fishery issues, and review the management plan goals.

Please consider coming to a meeting for more information and perhaps become more active in our programs. We count on our volunteers to make our efforts pay off in protecting and preserving our environment. Call Carole for further details or questions at 739-8717.

WINTER VAN ETEN LAKE WATER QUALITY REPORT 2010 TESTING

The last of four samples to measure phosphorous and total suspended solids were taken in September and October from the Pine River, four smaller streams flowing into the lake and Van Etten Creek below the dam. A report on the results of this sampling for 2009 and 2010 will be presented at the Spring VELA meeting.

2010 RESULTS

SECCHI DISK CLARITY

The dramatic increase in the annual average clarity seems to have leveled off. The average clarity over the summer of 2010 was **7.4 feet**. The 10 year average is **6.4 feet**. The increased clarity appears to be contributing to an increase in nuisance aquatic plant growth in the lake.

PHOSPOROUS TESTING

The 2010 spring overturn phosphorous concentration was **27 parts per billion [ppb]**. The spring result is thought to be a good estimate of the average phosphorous concentration in the lake. The 10 year average spring concentration is **27.6 ppb**. The 2010 fall phosphorous concentration was **25.0 ppb** with a 10 year average of **30.0 ppb**. Although the fall concentration appears to be decreasing, there is still an adequate amount of phosphorous available to support prolific aquatic plant and algae growth.

CHLOROPHYLL TESTING

This test is intended to help to determine the relative amount of algae in the lake by measuring chlorophyll concentrations. The mean for 2010 was **4.3 ppb** and the median was **2.6 ppb**. The mean and median chlorophyll concentrations over the past 10 years were **7.5 ppb** and **4.2 ppb** respectively. A higher concentration of chlorophyll indicates that more algae are present at the time of sampling.

The relatively warm and dry conditions this summer have contributed to the larger and longer lasting Blue-green algae bloom experienced this year compared to the previous four years. These conditions also contributed to the prolific weed growth experienced in both our lake and many other lakes throughout the state.

VELA INBOX ...

Questions? If they haven't been answered by this newsletter, contact Ron Mathison at statewideron@charter.net



<p>TAWAS</p> <p>SAND & GRAVEL</p>	<p>MARK D. EKLUND</p> <p><i>Sand, Gravel Topsoil Fieldstone, Drainstone</i></p> <p>Full Service Excavation</p> <p><i>also Septic Systems & Cleanouts</i></p>
<p>(989) 362-2431</p> <p>1779 E. US-23, E. Tawas, MI 48730</p>	

If you would like to place an ad in the newsletters, please contact Carole Plunkey for details.