



# VanEtten Lake Association Fall Newsletter 2018

*Keeping Members Informed and Involved*



**Important Announcement:** It is with sincere sympathy and heartfelt sadness that the VELA board announces the recent death of our newly elected board president, Dave Swenson, who died on Monday, October 8, 2018. Unknown to most of us, Dave had been battling cancer for many years but still remained active and committed to being involved with his community. As you may recall, Dave was the man behind the formation of the VanEtten Lake Endowment Fund and has been a major contributor for years. His family has named this fund as an option for donations in lieu of flowers. More information on [facebook.com/vanettenlakeassociation](https://facebook.com/vanettenlakeassociation).

### What to Do About the Algae?

None of us like the annual show of algae when some parts of the lake become like “pea soup” or have large mats of intertwining filaments, but it has been an annual event for many seasons and there are reasons why. Algae grows in almost every water body, including swimming pools, when the right combination of sunlight and nutrients exist. Microscopic green algae are the base for the aquatic ecosystem, providing essential food for organisms at the bottom of the food chain so they can then grow to feed bigger organisms and so on, so that we can all catch fish worthy of taking a picture.

Having said this, dense green algae growth can inhibit boat navigation, impact fishing, and make you think twice about putting your body in the water to take a swim. Good lake management requires a knowledge of all these factors to make decisions on whether to treat algae or wait for it to disappear.

Green algae do not cause problems for people or pets that swim, drink lake water, or accidentally ingest some. Blue-green algae, however, is a different organism and can be harmful to people and pets, causing skin reactions and/or gastric upsets. Samples can be taken to determine which algae is present and then take action to inform residents to avoid using the water if blue-green algae is present. Treatment is very expensive and rarely effective. This was tried in 2016 and the algae moved out of the treatment area before the algaecide could kill all the cells.

Since VanEtten Lake is an impoundment formed by damming a river, the waters are always flowing and generated winds do a good job of moving the algae until it is no longer present in the lake. A comprehensive testing program has been discussed by the weed committee, but it was determined to be cost prohibitive and most often unnecessary due to the movement of the algae out of the treatment zones. Specific areas of algae can still be treated with algaecides (regulated by our lake management team) if/when deemed appropriate.

Hopefully, a balance can be achieved whereby residents can enjoy the water for most of our summer months of recreation while still supporting a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

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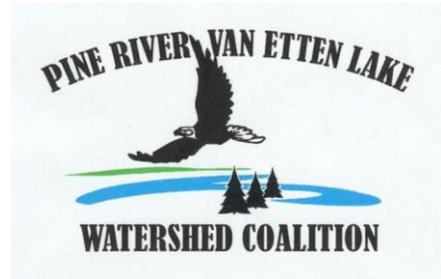
Welcome to newly elected board member Mike Clemons (Russel Williams was elected but later rescinded his nomination). Also welcome to appointed member Dan Stock, who graciously agreed to fill the open position until July elections. That still leaves an opening on the nine member board yet to be filled.

### Event Calendar

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Nov 1, 2018      | Lake Draw Down Begins                               |
| Mid November     | Lake Draw Down Completed                            |
| January 2019     | Dues Invoices Mailed                                |
| January 10, 2019 | PRVEL Quarterly Mtg.<br>10 am – Harrisville Library |

## Watershed Update (PRVEL)

Way back in 1999 when studies were being conducted on VanEtten Lake to learn more about lake conditions and what factors were contributing to the large amount of weed growth, there was a general consensus that events happening north of the lake, in the huge watershed that lies mostly in Alcona county, had a direct effect on lake quality. Not to say that we, as riparians, don't play a large part in keeping the lake healthy, but impoundments are not the same as spring-fed lakes and as such, require a different approach when trying to assess the best ways to sustain good water quality.



The two primary factors which seem to be most important to lake residents in relation to keeping the lake “less weedy”, clear/clean enough to swim in, and healthy enough to support a variety of fish species, are 1) reducing the amount of sediment coming from the river which either deposits itself on the bottom or “muddies up” the lake, and 2) stopping unwanted nutrients from flowing into the lake (esp. phosphorus which aids in plant growth) while maintaining a balance sufficient to support plant life for a variety of fish. These things are accomplished through projects and programs (bank stabilization through tree/brush revetment, road/stream crossing repairs/restorations, stream temp monitoring, water quality testing, steam mapping to promote fishery) aimed at addressing those factors.

Watershed management has always been based on a comprehensive plan which is like the “master guide” for planning and implementation of improvement projects and we rely on it heavily to target projects needing attention. Working with partners (Huron Pines conservation council, DNR, USFS, and local conservation districts), we try to prioritize what areas we need to address in any given year, knowing that our efforts may take years to see the impact.

Please take the opportunity to check into what the watershed group is doing by attending quarterly meetings, volunteering for a specific project or program, and/or visiting the VELA website (currently down for repairs) and watershed facebook page – [www.facebook/pineriverwatershed](http://www.facebook/pineriverwatershed) – and click “like”. Donations to the watershed are the only source of funding other than grant opportunities when awarded and may be sent to PRVEL, PO Box 680, Oscoda, MI.

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### A Chance for You to Donate to PRVEL



Mark your calendars for Tuesday, Nov 27<sup>th</sup> as the date to go online and make a donation to support the work of the watershed. All VELA members will be receiving emails closer to the date as a reminder that PRVEL would appreciate your financial support (in ANY amount) at the time of this fundraiser, sponsored by the Community Foundation of NE Michigan – the organization that handles the VELA Endowment Fund. Please consider donating and thus, become a partner yourself in helping to keep the lake and supporting environment healthy.

### **Giving Tuesday**



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**Dam Diary:** Direct any questions related to lake levels or dam operations to drain commissioner's office – 984-1052

## Annual Picnic- A Summer Treat



Thanks go out to the Picnic Committee for putting together another great VELA picnic for all our residents and their families – community invited too! Meant to bring all of us together for good food, games/entertainment and interesting conversation, the picnic is an effort to provide a fun day of getting together to perhaps meet new friends, share stories, and participate in the fun activities while enjoying a scrumptious meal, some of which is prepared by your neighbors!

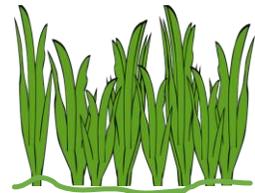
The picnic has always been on the first Saturday of August each year, but will need to be moved to the second Saturday next year – August 10<sup>th</sup> – due to circumstances beyond our control.

The picnic committee is always looking for additional members to help in planning and preparing for the event and welcomes new input – contact Carole Plunkey to offer your assistance - [caroleplunkey@charter.net](mailto:caroleplunkey@charter.net)

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## Interesting Facts on Water Quality

- 10 year average for water clarity is 7.3 ft.
- 10 year average for temperature is approx. 68 degrees
- Temperature is the most important factor in sustaining healthy fish populations (temps in 60's support pan fish, walleye, bass, pike, crappie)
- Increased phosphorus (supports plant/algae growth) enters the lake via fertilizers, sewage, yard debris, sediment, detergents, pet/wildlife waste
- Typically, green algae appears on the lake each season but does not stay long - sometimes it is seen by lake management firm, but disappears before treatment plan
- lake residents – riparians- can impact water quality by poorly maintained septic systems, lawn fertilizing too close to the shoreline, depositing yard debris into the lake waters, failing to provide a shoreline buffer zone to stop unwanted nutrients from entering lake
- VanEtten Lake is defined as mesotrophic, meaning it falls midway between lakes that have clear/deep waters and little plant life to those that are shallower and support abundant plant growth. Our water quality has shown improvement over the past several years.



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## Get the Facts Straight on PFC's

If you want factual information on the reported chemicals (PFAS/PFOA) found in ground and surface waters in and around VanEtten Lake, look to the following resources:

- District Health Dept #2 – 989-362-6183 or [www.dhd2.org/wurtsmith-activities](http://www.dhd2.org/wurtsmith-activities)
- Mich DEQ – 1-800-622-9278
- MDHHS – [www.michigan.gov/wurtsmith](http://www.michigan.gov/wurtsmith) or [www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse](http://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse)
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry website – [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc)
- Advisory Restoration Board - Wednesday Dec 5, 2018 – 5:30PM at Parks Library/Oscoda
- Need Our Water (NOW) citizens group – meetings every third Thursday/month @5:30 PM – Parks Library and/or visit their Facebook page
- Pick up informational brochures at all announced meetings on this issue

## Fishing Is Still Safe and Fun!



Picture of Ethen with bass  
With permission of grandparents Pat and  
Dave Young

For current guidelines on the status of eating fish from VanEtten Lake, go to [www.michigan.gov/pfosresponse](http://www.michigan.gov/pfosresponse)

For more information on overall Eat Safe Fish guidelines listed by counties, go to [www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish)

### **Fall Tips:**

- Rake the beached sand and remove dead weeds once lake level is down
- Do not burn yard debris/leaves right next to shoreline or on exposed beach area to avoid ashes from entering the lake
- Take all raked leaves to landfill or use as compost – if burning, check if burning permitted online
- Move all docks/hoists and yard furniture away from shoreline to avoid damage in spring if/when ice melts and/or excessive rain events cause flooding



### Board Members 2018-2019

Pres Celeste Creger  
VP. Mike Clemons  
Sec. Rick Copland  
Treas. Leonard Brockhahn  
Doug Jager  
Leif Lindblom  
Frank Rainey  
Dan Stock

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### **VELA INBOX**



Got questions about the lake or the association?  
Email any board member and/or visit

[facebook.com/vanettenlakeassociation](https://facebook.com/vanettenlakeassociation) and make a comment. Website is also a good reference and should be back up and running soon – [www.vanettenlake.org](http://www.vanettenlake.org)