



# Van Etten Lake Association

## Fall 2019 Newsletter

Keeping Members Informed and Involved

VELA Members:

Summer fun is gone ☺ but there are still many things to do in Oscoda and on Van Etten Lake. Fall fun: Autumn colors, Fishing, Deer Hunting, etc. Winter fun: Cross Country Skiing, Snowmobiling, sledding, Winter events: Northern Lights Parade Dec. 7. While some of us spend the Winters in the South, some are only a few hours away. Come and enjoy your lake and Oscoda's four seasons!

We welcome the new members of our Board of Directors – Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents. Welcome to: **Betsy Dillingham** (Membership Director), **Victoria Targosz** (NOW Representative) and **Janice Wilber** (Vice President). As always, the *Van Etten Lake Association* website has a full list of your Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and a myriad of other information of interest to our members. Check it out at (<https://www.vanettenlake.org/>).

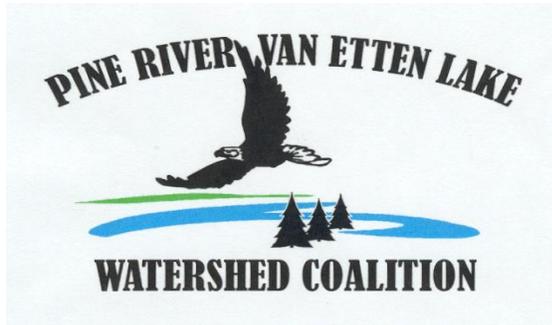
VELA has much to be thankful for this past year! We thank **Celeste Creger** for stepping in to lead our board. Great job Celeste and thank you! We also want to thank all our committee chairs and representatives for their magnificent work over the past year: *Membership* - **Shirley Brockhahn**, *Weed Committee* – **Doug Jager** and **Leonard Brockhahn**, *Water Quality Committee* - **Dan Stock**, *Picnic Committee* – **Carole Plunkey** and *RAB* (Restoration Advisory Board) *Representatives* – **Joe Plunkey** and **Dan Stock**. A special THANK YOU to departing board member **Doug Jager**. Doug served for many years as a faithful board member and tireless Weed Committee Chair. He was always there to help out with anything and was the “go to guy” when it came to questions concerning lake management. *Thank you, Doug!* We wish you well in your new home down below and hope to see your smiling face from time to time up here in Oscoda.

All VELA members are asked to thoughtfully consider joining one of our committees for the 2020 year. This is not only a great way to keep informed, but also make new friends and renew old acquaintances. Our first Van Etten Lake Association General Meeting for the 2020 year will be on Saturday, May 30 - 10:00am at the Robert J. Parks Oscoda Library. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. We are only as strong and vibrant as our involved membership.

Richard Copland  
President, Board of Directors

### VELA INBOX

Have questions about the lake association?  
Email any board member and/or visit  
[facebook.com/vanettenlakeassociation](https://www.facebook.com/vanettenlakeassociation) and  
make a comment. Our website is also a good  
reference- [www.vanettenlake.org](http://www.vanettenlake.org)



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Pine River Watershed (PRVEL) in Alcona County is looking for people who care about the environment to help with:

- stream sampling
- finding and treating non-native plants
- watch for problems on river/streams (River Keepers Program)
- “hands on” field work

Contacts: [989-739-8717](tel:989-739-8717) or [989-310-6408](tel:989-310-6408)

<https://www.facebook.com/pineriverwatershed>

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**



## **Annual Picnic – Summer Fun**



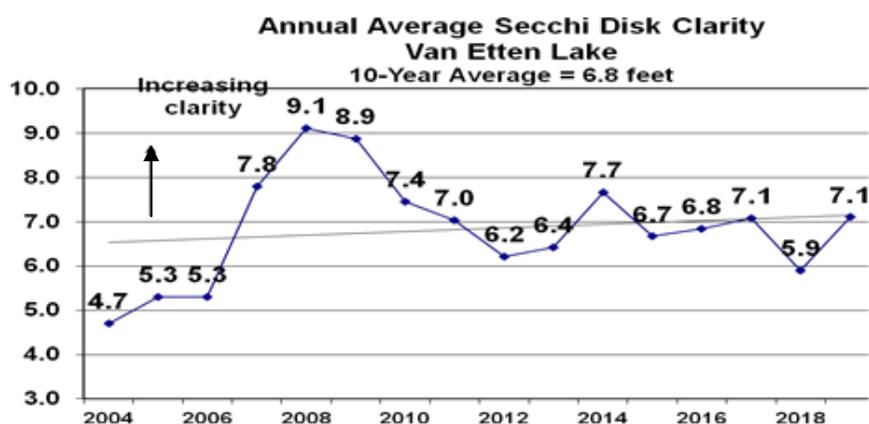
Fun was had by all that attended the Annual VELA picnic! Our families and community enjoyed good food, old and new friends and fun activities. Events included: 50/50 Raffle, Silent Auction, games, and Dot the Clown and her unique balloon animals.

The 2020 picnic will be on Saturday, August 15, save the date! The picnic committee is always in need of additional members to help plan and welcomes your input. Contact Carole Plunkey at [caroleplunkey@charter.net](mailto:caroleplunkey@charter.net).

## 2019 VAN ETTEN LAKE WATER QUALITY RESULTS TO DATE

### SECCHI DISK CLARITY

The average of the weekly clarity measurements taken for 2019 was **7.1 feet**. The average for the summer of 2018 was **5.9 feet**. The 10-year average is **6.8 feet**. The average water temperature mid-lake over the summer was **69.8 deg. F**. This compares to a 10-year average of **69.2 deg. F**. The clarity and temperature measurements are taken weekly from mid-May to mid-September. As indicated by the trend line on the graph, there has been a trend to greater annual average clarity in the lake over the past 15 years. The period from 2007 through 2009 shows the effects of the introduction of zebra mussels, which seems to have leveled out.



### PHOSPHOROUS TESTING

The 2019 spring overturn phosphorus concentration was **19 parts per billion [ppb]**. This sample was taken on April 17. The comparable concentration in 2018 was **29 ppb**. The spring result is thought to be a good estimate of the average phosphorus concentration in the lake. Comparative samples taken at the outlet of the dam on April 7 and 30 averaged **18 ppb**. The 10-year average spring concentration is **24.9 ppb**. The results of the fall sampling are not yet available.

### CHLOROPHYLL A TESTING

This test is intended to help to determine the relative amount of algae in the lake by measuring chlorophyll concentrations. The 2018 average concentration was **8.8 parts per billion [ppb]**. The 10 year average concentration is **6.4 ppb**. The results from the five monthly samples taken from May through September in 2019 are not yet available. The algae bloom that occurred this year ran from late August through mid-September.

## **Updates from the RAB Meeting of September 11, 2019**

The sampling has been completed for the Expanded Site Inspection (ESI) phase of the restoration activity and the draft report is being prepared. The draft from the contractor is scheduled to come to the Air Force (AF) for review by October 15. On completion of this review, the report will be sent to EGLE (formerly MDEQ) for state review by December 31. EGLE expects their review will be complete by March 31, 2020. The RAB Community Co-Chair, Arnie Leriche, requested that the draft report be made available to the RAB prior to completion of the EGLE review.

The draft report will include recommendations for interim actions that could and should be taken prior to the completion of the full Restoration Inspection (RI) process which will take 4-6 years. It is anticipated that these recommendations may include possible actions to be taken to intercept PFAS laden flows to Van Etten Lake.

Unfortunately, the AF is still prioritizing drinking water contamination as their main focus. Unless the AF/EGLE dispute resolution process results in the AF being responsible for reducing the PFAS levels in the ground water flow to Van Etten Lake to state levels, it is doubtful that interception of flow to the lake will receive a high priority as residents still using wells for drinking water have the option of connecting to the Oscoda water system even though under state law these residents cannot be required to connect.

These high PFAS groundwater flows result in the formation of periodic foaming mostly along the west shore of the lake and down to Van Etten Creek. Both the Department of Defense and EGLE are planning to continue to sample the foam to further define its extent and source.

Oscoda Township reported that Phase I of the water main extension project has been completed. They are currently seeking additional funding to make up the shortfall in estimated funding for Phase II along Loud Drive. The line will extend to as close to Phalen Creek as funding allows. The Township is also looking into the installation of a wash station at Ratliff Park to enable lake users to rinse off foam.

It was also reported that samples taken in the old Oscoda dump area have shown no or low levels of PFAS in drinking water wells and runoff to streams feeding Van Etten Lake. Further testing is planned.

The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the process of revising the 'do not eat boundaries' for deer to follow section lines. The area south of the Au Sable River will benefit most from this. DNR also has plans to encourage hunters to turn in at least 50 deer samples this fall and to harvest additional deer in Clarke's Marsh next spring in order to get a better understanding of the extent of contaminated deer and the need to revise the 'do not eat boundaries' even further. DNR is also overseeing an ecological risk assessment being conducted by Purdue University in the Clarke's Marsh.

The conversion of the Mission Street Treatment facility to a 200 gpm resin based system to remove PFAS is under construction and to be completed by early December. This conversion will be of most benefit to the Au Sable watershed as the current effluent from the facility goes to a storm drain which discharges to the river upstream of the RR bridge.

## **I have foam in front of my house – what should I do?**

First, we need to remember that foam can be a naturally occurring event on the lake due to wind, weather, etc.

### **Naturally occurring foam:**

- Is off-white and/or brown
- Often accumulates in bays, eddies, or river blockages
- May have an earthy or fishy aroma

### **PFAS contaminated foam:**

- Can be bright white coloring
- Tends to pile up like shaving cream
- Is usually lightweight
- May blow inland
- Can be sticky

If you suspect the foam is not naturally occurring, **do not try to remove the foam yourself**. Call the 24-hour Pollution Emergency Alert (PEAS) hotline at 800-292-4706 to report the foam.

When you call the PEAS line, you will need to provide the following information:

- Your contact information (name, address, phone number)
- Where exactly the foam is located (e.g. south side of Van Etten Lake near Ratliff Park)
- How much foam is present, length by width by thickness? (they understand this is an estimate or best guess)
- If it is a floating mass of foam, which direction is it moving?
- What time did you first observe the foam, and is it still present?
- Optional but helpful: wind speed, wind direction, air temperature
- Optional but helpful: did/can you take a picture of the foam?

For more information, go to Michigan.gov PFAS Response. The link is:  
[https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/0,9038,7-365-88059\\_91295---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/0,9038,7-365-88059_91295---,00.html)

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## **VELA Membership Information**

(as of September 17, 2019)

According to Oscoda Township records, there are 643 individual lake property owners. 36% (259) of them are currently VELA members.

Our Membership Director, Betsy Dillingham, keeps up-to-date master lists of all members and potential members. It's important to keep her informed of changes to email and mailing addresses. Please send changes to [vela.dilly@gmail.com](mailto:vela.dilly@gmail.com) so that you continue to receive newsletters and notices sent by VELA. **Look for your 2020 Membership Application in the US Mail, January 2020.**

## 2019 Lake Pro Weed Control Summary

Lake Pro again served as our lake management consultant. Our strategy was a continuation of our overall plan for the lake:

1. Locate and aggressively treat Eurasian Milfoil.
2. Locate and treat any other invasive species such as Curly Leaf Pondweed.
3. Promote native plant growth while keeping it below nuisance levels.

In 2019 we enjoyed another year without invasive species in our lake. This allowed us to focus on the nuisance native plants. Lake Pro conducted three lake vegetation surveys throughout the summer (6-17, 7-9, 8-19) recommending treatments be done in various areas after the first two. Following the third survey the only problem found was our annual algae bloom. Samples were taken and tested; no treatment was recommended.

The aquatic plant management on Van Etten lake is progressing but is not complete. Continuing our effort is vital to keeping the lake in the great condition we saw this past summer. We must continue to search for new introductions of invasive species while keeping native plants below nuisance levels. These efforts will make boating, swimming, fishing and relaxing on the lake more enjoyable for everyone.

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### Giving Tuesday Coming Soon!

Giving Tuesday is a world day of giving to help fund local non-profit organizations, like the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed group (PRVEL), our partner in helping to keep the lake and watershed healthy.

This online event is sponsored by the Community Foundation of NE Michigan and will take place this year on **Tuesday, December 3**, throughout the entire day, offering people the chance to donate money to help fund projects and programs. Any amount is appreciated.

Just go online to [www.cfnem.org/givingtuesday](http://www.cfnem.org/givingtuesday) and select Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed from the listings – click on the “give now” button. A confirmation of your donation will be emailed back to you followed by a confirmation letter for tax purposes.

2019-2020 Board Members		2020 CALENDAR	
Pres. Richard Copland	<a href="mailto:VELABpres@gmail.com">VELABpres@gmail.com</a>	Jan 9, 2020	PRVEL Meeting
VP Janice Wilber	<a href="mailto:GJWilber55@gmail.com">GJWilber55@gmail.com</a>	April 9, 2020	PRVEL Meeting
Sec. Celeste Creger	<a href="mailto:cacreger@ameritech.net">cacreger@ameritech.net</a>	May 30, 2020	VELA Meeting
Treas. Leonard Brockhahn	<a href="mailto:sbrock50@gmail.com">sbrock50@gmail.com</a>	July 11, 2020	VELA Meeting
Betsy Dillingham	<a href="mailto:vela.dilly@gmail.com">vela.dilly@gmail.com</a>	Aug 15, 2020	VELA Picnic
Leif Lindblom	<a href="mailto:leif@lindblomfamily.com">leif@lindblomfamily.com</a>	Sept 12, 2020	VELA Meeting
Frank Rainey	<a href="mailto:frank.rainey@sbcglobal.net">frank.rainey@sbcglobal.net</a>		
Dan Stock	<a href="mailto:dstock48750@gmail.com">dstock48750@gmail.com</a>		
Victoria Targosz	<a href="mailto:victoria@targoszwalker.com">victoria@targoszwalker.com</a>		

