



# Van Etten Lake Association Spring Newsletter

Keeping Members Informed and Involved

**President's message.....**

Wow!!!! This has been one winter we are all glad has come to an end. The ice fishermen, snowmobilers and cross country enthusiasts were finally reward with a plentiful playground. That hasn't been the case for most of the winters of late. Sweet!!!!!!

Our dam operator has handled the lake very well this spring as the level has been carefully monitored to keep the flooding chances low. However, we all need to keep floatable items away from the banks until the flood threat is over. The annual spring raising of the lake level will occur immediately after ice-out as long as heavy rain is not predicted.

Our weed committee has met and laid plans for the summer to control, as best as we can, the growth of aquatic vegetation. Lake Pro Inc. has been awarded the lake management contract for 2014 as a result of their acceptable performance over the last couple of years. As this message goes to print there is still ice on the lake and it is already late April. This is an encouraging sign for weed control efforts (see article page 4).

If you haven't had a chance to see it yet please visit the dam and see the newly installed electric gate wenches. We were pleased with the upgrade that made the raising and lowering of the dam gates easier and most importantly—safer (see article page 2).

VELA needs volunteers to handle our annual picnic held the first Saturday of August. Our picnic chairperson has retired and we need help in replacing her. Please contact me if you would care to help us with our picnic. The board will provide support that will make the job easier and our former picnic chair person, Janice Wilber is offering help to assure a smooth transition. Please consider helping. Please mark your calendars for **May 31** which is the date for our next general meeting.

Ron Mathison, President

**VELA Welcomes New Website Master**

Our lake association's website, [vanettenlake.org](http://vanettenlake.org), has needed a facelift by someone who knows the technology and we are happy to announce that we now have a new part-time webmaster, Tim Schafer. Tim is currently going to college in preparation for a career in medicine, but he loves doing this kind of work and has already proven to be very skilled in managing the site as well as timely in his updates.

The board decided to establish the website to move into the new generation of technology and provide ongoing, up to date information for members to access anytime. This is also the place to look for "Hot News" which may be related to things like restrictions due to weed treatment, lost articles, or the like.

**EVENT CALENDAR**

- Sat - May 31 – Spring Mtg
- Sat - July 12 - Annual Mtg - Elections
- Thurs - July 24 - PRVEL Mtg
- Sat - Aug 2 - Annual Picnic
- Sat - Sept 6 – Fall Mtg

**Board Members:**

- |            |                   |  |
|------------|-------------------|--|
| Pres:      | Ron Mathison      | <a href="mailto:ronaldamathison@gmail.com">ronaldamathison@gmail.com</a> |
| Vice Pres: | Carole Plunkey    | <a href="mailto:caroleplunkey@charter.net">caroleplunkey@charter.net</a> |
| Sec:       | Joe Plunkey       | <a href="mailto:joeplunkey@hotmail.com">joeplunkey@hotmail.com</a>       |
| Treas:     | Leonard Brockhahn | <a href="mailto:sbrock50@gmail.com">sbrock50@gmail.com</a>               |
|            | Greg Cole         | <a href="mailto:colescottages@gmail.com">colescottages@gmail.com</a>     |
|            | Paul Rekowski     | <a href="mailto:prekowski@yahoo.com">prekowski@yahoo.com</a>             |
|            | Janice Wilber     | <a href="mailto:gjwilber55@yahoo.com">gjwilber55@yahoo.com</a>           |
|            | Tom James         | <a href="mailto:peabody56@comcast.net">peabody56@comcast.net</a>         |
|            | Tim Arnold        | <a href="mailto:timarn@braunkendrick.com">timarn@braunkendrick.com</a>   |

**February Fishing Tournament on the Lake**

It was 19 degrees and very sunny on Saturday, Feb 15, when VanEtten Lake played host to the first annual "Fishing for the Future" all species tournament conducted by the Iosco County Conservation District.

This was a fundraiser for the organization, which is a local unit of state government that works to provide programs and technical assistance to protect and enhance the land and water resources in the county. They are also a partner in the Pine River VanEtten Lake Watershed Coalition.

Participants came out onto the snow covered ice at Ken Ratliff Park for the event and 15 adults took home substantial prizes for their catches of primarily perch, although the first prize winner landed a 0.62 oz. sunfish. Prizes were also awarded in the youth division for 5 happy youngsters.

It was reported that about 200 tickets were sold and approximately 100 fish were caught and released after being judged. Please see the district's website for more pictures and details ([ioscoconservation.org](http://ioscoconservation.org)).



2014 Fishing Tournament



Dam

**VanEtten Dam Upgrade:** The dam has recently undergone improvements in its operation of the two gates which are for adjusting lake water levels. Up until now, these gates have been operated manually by chain hoists and have been difficult to manage as well as get to when the weather has made the area around them unsafe. There are now 4 electrical hoists in place as well as new lighting, to be used when needed. In case of a power outage, a radial chain hoists remain in place.

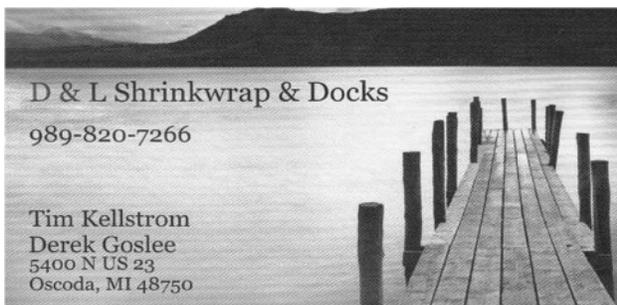
This work was under the guidance of the county drain commission and completed by Spicer Group Engineering.

**New Fishing License Information**

Michigan's fishing, hunting, and ORV license structure changed as of March 1, 2014. This was reportedly done to make buying a license easier as well as provide funding to improve outdoor recreational opportunities.

Anglers will no longer need to choose between restricted and all-species fishing licenses. All fishing licenses will be good for all species. Prices have changed as well, so check out the DNR website for more details ([www.dnr/fishing](http://www.dnr/fishing)).

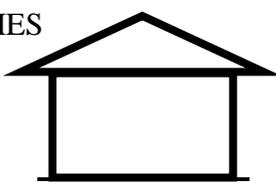
**REMINDER....** Effective 2012: state law prohibits the application of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus. Under this law, application of fertilizer to turf within 15 ft. of any surface water is prohibited unless a 10 ft. wide buffer (natural vegetation) separates the grass from the water.



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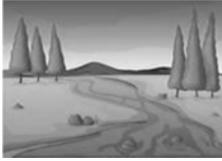
Tim Kellstrom  
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Mini Storage Units  
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Contact Carole Plunkey (739-8717) if you wish to place an ad in the newsletter.



### Pine River VanEtten Lake Watershed News (PRVEL)

Throughout last fall and into the winter months, PRVEL volunteers have been working on the planning stages for the large AuSable Watershed grant project slated for implementation this year and into 2015. As a “sub-watershed” of the AuSable, the PRVEL watershed will be targeted for several restoration and road stream crossing improvements, along with programs to deal with invasive species – one site in particular is located just north of the mouth of the Pine as it enters the lake-monitoring procedures, and possibly some educational events. More details will be available as the work progresses and can be followed on the [vanettenlake.org](http://vanettenlake.org) website under the “watershed” tag.

Also this winter, PRVEL was pleased to be a sponsor for the February fishing tournament held on VanEtten Lake and hosted by the Iosco County Conservation District (see article). We work with several outside agencies to help accomplish our goals and look forward to more partnering with the district for watershed projects.

As always, we count on volunteers to get the work done, both through meetings and hands on projects, so please consider joining our efforts to improve the land and waterways which drain into our lake for the benefit of us all, now and in the future. Contact Carole Plunkey for further details on ways you might like to show your support.

If you would like to receive the twice a year PRVEL newsletter, please email your contact info to Dan Stock at [dstock4239@charter.net](mailto:dstock4239@charter.net) and please mark your calendars for our next regular meeting, Thursday, July 24 -10 am at Greenbush Twp Hall.

### Lake Monitor Report 2013 VAN ETTEN LAKE WATER QUALITY RESULTS

#### SECCHI DISK CLARITY

The average of the weekly clarity measurements taken for 2013 was **6.4 feet**. The average for the summer of 2012 was **6.2 feet**. The 10 year average is **6.8 feet**. The average water temperature mid-lake over the summer was 68.6 deg. F. This compares to a 10 year average of 68.5 deg. F. The clarity and temperature measurements are taken weekly from mid-May to mid-September.

#### PHOSPHOROUS TESTING

The 2013 spring overturn phosphorus concentration was **23 parts per billion [ppb]**. The comparable concentration in 2012 was **15 ppb**. The spring result is thought to be a good estimate of the average phosphorus concentration in the lake. The 10 year average spring concentration is **24.5 ppb**.

The 2013 fall phosphorus concentration was **35 parts per billion [ppb]**. The comparable concentration in 2012 was **68 ppb**. The 10 year average fall concentration is **32.9 ppb**.

#### CHLOROPHYLL A TESTING

This test is intended to help to determine the relative amount of algae in the lake by measuring chlorophyll concentrations. The median for 2013 was **8.2 ppb** compared to a median of **6.4** for 2012. The average of the median values for Chlorophyll A concentration over the past 10 years is **5.2 ppb**.

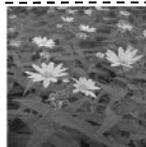
#### PHRAGMITES REPORT

The small stands of Phragmites on the Camp Nissokone property have been treated in the fall of 2013 through the cooperative efforts of Huron Pines and the YMCA. Hopefully, this stand was treated before it could spread to other locations. **Please let us know if you spot a new tall grow in along your shoreline that you are not familiar with so it can be evaluated before it becomes a serious problem.**

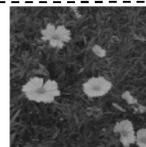
The sampling results will now be posted monthly on the Van Etten Lake Association web site – <http://www.vanettenlake.org>

Finally, the 2014 sampling season begins in mid-May with the collection of the Spring Phosphorous sample and weekly clarity samples. Please contact Dan Stock at [dstock4239@charter.net](mailto:dstock4239@charter.net) for more information if you think you would like to volunteer to help with the CLMP sampling program.

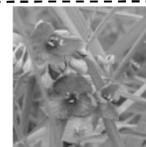
**Choose Native Plants**: if you're considering adding some color and vegetation to your shoreline, here are a few native plants that do well in our region



Woodland Sunflower



Coreopsis



Spiderwort



Bee Balm

**Lake Pro Spring Plans:** Beginning their fourth year as VELA's lake management firm, Lake Pro has taken into account the very harsh and cold winter we all experienced this year, noting that "... thick ice and snow cover on the lake slows plant production and many die. So, many plants will have to grow anew which could result in a slower spring for plant management and may even lead to a shift in the plant community."

Their plan is to conduct surveys on June 9, July 1, Aug 4, and Aug 25, then, if needed, treatments will take place within 10 days of each survey. Of course, treatment of the NW bay, near Pine Rive inlet may occur sooner if conditions warrant.

They are working with VELA and the Oscoda Twp. officials to provide pre-treatment notifications to property owners to better prepare all of us for those events.

**When Do You Need a Permit?** Certain construction activities on inland lakes require permits from the Land and Water Management Division of the Michigan Dept of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The following are typical projects regulated under this agency:

- shore protection - because shore protection structures (seawalls) can have negative effects on natural resources and other shoreline properties, protection should only be installed when it is needed to address erosion problems and the recommendation would be the use of natural treatments, like natural stone, plants and shrubs, and un-mowed vegetation, not vertical steel seawalls
- permanent docks or boat hoists – if docks or hoists are left in the water year round, they require a permit; seasonal docks and hoists do not require a permit if they are for private, non-commercial use by a landowner, do not interfere with the use of the water by others, do not interfere with water flow, and will not be placed in wetlands
- beach sanding – placement of sand, pea stone, or other clean fill below the water line requires a permit. A reasonable amount of sand may be placed landward of the water line without a permit. Sand cannot be placed in a wetland
- dredging – dredging below the ordinary high water mark of a lake requires a permit. Excavation on dry land within 500 ft of a lake that does not extend below the water table does not need a permit – however, a soil erosion permit is required from the county for this activity

For additional information visit [www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes](http://www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes) or call the Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278.



**Fish Advisory Information** Driven by the concern regarding how the fish advisory for Clark's Marsh might affect the VanEtten Lake fishery, several lake residents attended a meeting hosted by the Michigan Dept. of Community Health (MDCH). Speakers gave their presentations regarding current findings and were available to answer any questions.

Essentially, MDCH strongly recommends no one eat any of the fish caught in Clark's Marsh, due to unsafe levels of a chemical called PFC found in the filets of the fish examined. Unsafe levels of PFC's were also found in fish from the lower AuSable River, so the recommendation is that no one eat any resident fish caught in the lower part of the river from Foote Dam to the river's mouth at Lake Huron. Resident fish are those that live year round in the river and include perch, bass, bluegill, and pumpkinseed.

There are NO advisories for VanEtten Lake for resident fish, but they continue their long established advisory for larger fish like walleye, trout, and pike to limit consumption to one (1) per month, primarily due to possible mercury contamination.

For further details, visit [www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish) or contact MDCH at 1-800-648-6942.



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**VELA INBOX ...**



Questions? If they haven't been answered by this newsletter, contact Ron Mathison at [ronaldamathison@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldamathison@gmail.com)