

VanEtten Lake Association Fall Newsletter 2017

Keeping Members Informed and Involved



Lake Pro Weed Management Program Summary

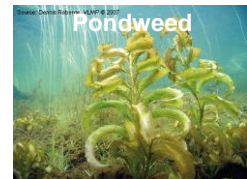
Lake Pro submitted an end-of season report which included the following:

- Treatment of nuisance weeds in NW bay and east side of Loud Island in June (these areas typically have overgrowth of weeds before the rest of the lake).
- Small patch of Eurasian Milfoil found near the dam, but unable to treat due to location (DEQ permit rule – cannot treat within 1,000 ft. of dam so herbicides don't flow out of the lake).
- June/July – algae and nuisance plants on 30.9 acres of shoreline treated with herbicides and algaecides.
- August/Sept surveys showed native plants in excess for some areas, but were not treated as they didn't fall within the guidelines of the permit (too far from shore, too deep water, undeveloped shoreline).
- Algae found in September, but was dying off by the time of the survey so no treatment recommended for best use of allocated funds. Plan for next year to improve the survey timing to better catch unwanted weeds and possible algae growth.

Native weeds that may become nuisance in large numbers.



Eel Grass



Welcome New VELA Board Members

The July meeting allows any VELA member to volunteer to serve at least 2 years on the board and this summer, three new members were voted in. Welcome to Rick Copland, Leif Lindblom, and Frank Rainey. Volunteering to join the board is a very good way to keep informed of lake issues and be a part of the process in keeping the lake healthy.

Board Members – 2016 - 2017	Event Calendar *
Pres Joe Plunkey joeplunkey@charter.net VP Dave Swenson dks110250@gmail.com Sec. Carole Plunkey caroleplunkey@charter.net Treas. Leonard Brockhahn sbrock50@gmail.com Frank Rainey frank.rainey@sbcglobal.net Rick Copland rcopland@marian-hs.org Leif Lindblom leif@lindblomfamily.com Doug Jager dj62852@charter.net Celeste Creger cacreger@ameritech.net	Mid November - Lake draw-down January 2018 - Dues Invoices Mailed *Watch for survey January 11, 2018 - PRVEL Quarterly Meeting 10 am – Harrisville Library

Endowment Fund Update:

The VanEtten Lake Endowment Fund was established in 2006 to benefit the water, fishery, and wildlife in and around VanEtten Lake. The VELA board has been discussing how best to utilize the spendable amount available through this fund, even considering partnering with the township to perhaps promote the beach park in some way, but no specific projects have yet been planned.

Projects funded by this program must relate directly to its purpose and ideas are always welcome. Contact any board member if you have suggestions or questions – brochures about the fund are also available upon request. Current spendable amount is \$3821.89.

Fish Story is True!



For those of you who think that the fishing in the lake is “not what it used to be”, take a look at what is possible when fishing VanEtten Lake.

Several fish species are present in the lake, with perch, pike, bass, and walleye reportedly being caught most often. Walleye stocking is still done approximately every other year, the last being in 2016. Several sites online feature information on VE Lake fishing, so check them out.

Pine River Watershed Report

The big event this season was centered on completion of the dam removal project at the old Buhl Dam site in Alcona County. This part of the watershed is used often by hunters, hikers, fisherman, and bird watchers, many of whom attended the celebration ceremony in September at the location. Partnering with Huron Pines conservation organization, DNR, US Forest Service, and US Fish and Wildlife brought about the completion of this expensive restoration which began back in May.

Free flowing waters in this stretch of the south branch of the Pine is important for sustaining a desirable fish habitat (primarily for brown/brook trout) and PRVEL volunteers will be monitoring this area post-construction to assess the impact of dam removal on the stream, shoreline, and fishery. Anyone wanting to help with this macroinvertebrate sampling project, please contact Arnie Leriche at aleriche526@gmail.com

Please note: An annual fundraising drive will be coming up online, **November 28th**, which is designated as Giving Tuesday for many non-profit organizations. Please google **Giving Tuesday** on that Tuesday and make an online donation to support PRVEL – any amount (\$1 - \$5 - \$10 or more) is appreciated and will be spent directly on conservation projects to benefit the watershed which then benefits the lake. Thank you for your support.

Before



After



Chemical Contamination of Water Remains an Issue

The most recent issue regarding the continuing problem of potentially harmful chemicals (PFAS/PFOS) in the groundwater around VanEtten Lake concerns foam that was found on the shorelines before Labor Day and the resultant caution given by District Health Dept #2 (PHD) to refrain from ingesting the foam due to evidence of PFAS contamination. This advisory was sent out to everyone on the VELA email list. As quoted from their website, “Skin contact with the foam is not considered to be of concern. Previous testing ... did not show PFAS levels that would be expected to harm human health.” However, with additional testing, higher levels were found which will now require additional testing and analysis. Thus, the advisory.

At the last VELA meeting of the year, a representative from Michigan Dept. Health and Human Services (MDHHS) made herself available via phone to answer member questions regarding updated information on testing done in and around the lake (DEQ drilled a new test well on Loud Drive this summer). She indicated information is still coming in and will be available by going online to www.michigan.gov/wurtsmith.

The VELA board contacted DEQ to follow up on test results, asking for a summary, which stated, “We have only had two drinking water wells above the 70 ppt. action level. One was across the base on F-41. That home was connected to the municipal water line. The other was across from the high school on River Rd. They were placed on bottled water. There are groundwater samples on the base that are above the 70 ppt. level and a couple of areas off-base that are above also. There are currently no samples on the east side of VanEtten Lake that are above the 70 ppt. ...”.

One of the main concerns voiced at the meeting concerned up-to-date testing of the fish in the lake for safe eating. It was surmised that fish testing has not been done for about 5 years and needs to be re-done. It was suggested that another community meeting be held to inform everyone on current testing results. Unsure when this might be held – possibly this year.

The newly formed Restoration Advisory Board, which is made up of both private citizens as well as agency, township, and Air Force officials, has met a couple of times and will meet again this Fall. They will be reporting back on continuing efforts to remediate the situation brought about by groundwater contamination of chemicals primarily from fire-retardants used when Wurtsmith AFB was in operation. Two VELA members are serving on this committee.

Lake Sandbar Investigation

In March of this year, DEQ performed two soil borings in the lake and took multiple water samples from each boring hole. A surface water sample was also taken. This phase of work was done to help determine if PFC's are found in the sediments under the lake, specifically, PFOS and PFOA compounds. EPA “action level” for health concerns is 70 ppt. (parts per trillion) for each compound or for a total of the two compounds added together.

The results of the water samples found 8-13 PFC's in each water sample. The PFOA results in the 6 boring water samples ranged from 0.79 to 1.6 ppt. and PFOS were not detected. The lake water sample itself found PFOS at 1.7 ppt. and PFOS at 2.6 ppt.

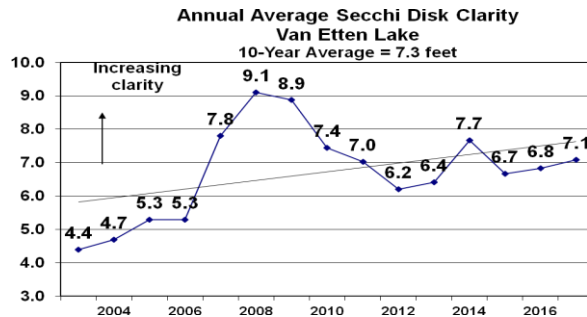


Water Quality Report

2017 VAN ETTEN LAKE WATER QUALITY RESULTS TO DATE

SECCHI DISK CLARITY

The average of the weekly clarity measurements taken for 2017 was **7.1 feet**. The average for the summer of 2016 was **6.8 feet**. The 10 year average is **7.3 feet**. The average water temperature mid-lake over the summer was 68.1 deg. F. This compares to a 10 year average of 68.3 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.



PHOSPHOROUS TESTING

The 2017 spring overturn phosphorus concentration was **28 parts per billion [ppb]**. This sample was taken on April 11. The comparable concentration in 2016 was **28 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 11 and 19 averaged **18.0 ppb**. The 10 year average spring concentration is **24.2 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 2016 average concentration was **7.7 parts per billion [ppb]**. The 10 year average concentration is **28 ppb**. The results from the five monthly samples taken from May through September in 2017 are not yet available. The algae bloom that occurred this year was unusual in that it was primarily green algae. The weed committee decided not to treat this as it occurred so late in the season.

PERFLOURIDATED CHEMICALS

See article on Chemical Contamination.

VELA INBOX



Got Questions? Email
joeplunkey@charter.net

QUESTION – When was the last time you had your septic system pumped? Every 3-5 yrs. is recommended



Reminder: January invoices for dues will have a survey included to assess member interest in pursuing removal of boat launch fees for VELA members. Please be sure to respond.