



VanEtten Lake Association

Fall Newsletter 2016

Keeping Members Informed and Involved



Weed Management Program Proving Effective

2016 was a very good year for recreation on VanEtten Lake. Remembering that VanEtten is an impoundment and as such is affected by many water quality factors, this statement is a direct result of effective lake management. The VELA weed committee, working with Lake Pro Management Firm, maintains a vigilant watch for unwanted invasive weeds as well as native nuisance weeds to hopefully stay on top of problems before they escalate.



Weather has a lot to do with whether plants/algae take a strong hold in inland lakes, and according to lake manager Pete Filpansick, “The previous winter was mild and this summer was very warm. These conditions caused many problems for Michigan lakes. The aggressive management on VanEtten Lake provided a better summer on the water than most other lakes.”

Eurasian Milfoil, our primary target invasive plant, has declined over the last few years, but still remains in the lake and was treated again this year. Other native weeds treated were pondweed and eel grass. Lake Pro's complete year end summary can be found on our website at vanettenlake.org.

A final reminder – there are several benefits to having aquatic plants in the lake, so we don't want to completely remove all weeds. Benefits include 1) stabilizing sediment which promotes greater water clarity, 2) oxygenating the water, and 3) providing valuable cover and habitat for fish and other organisms. Removing all plants is counterproductive management if your goal is to improve water quality.

Weed Control Budget Summary

Lake Pro Management Consulting -----	\$7,000
MDEQ Aquatic Nuisance Control Permit -----	\$1,500
Herbicide Treatment #1 -----	\$3,040
Herbicide Treatment #2 -----	\$17,120
Herbicide Treatment #3 -----	<u>\$10,850</u>
2016 Lake Management Total -----	\$39,510



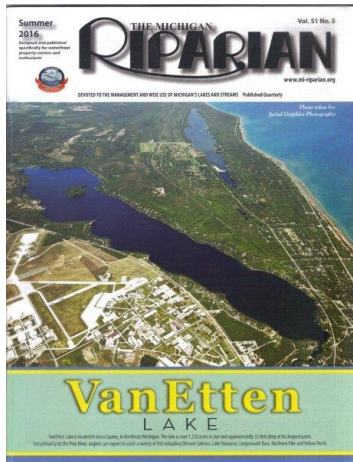
Board Members – 2016 - 2017

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Sec Carole Plunkey	caroleplunkey@charter.net
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Event Calendar

- Oct 27, 2016 - PRVEL Quarterly Meeting
Greenbush Twp Hall – 10 AM
- November (mid) 2016 - Lake Draw-down
- January 2017 - Dues Invoices Mailed
- January 26, 2017 – PRVEL Quarterly Meeting
Greenbush Twp Hall – 10 AM

VanEtten Lake Featured in Riparian Magazine



The word *riparian* is defined as “a person who owns land on the bank of a natural watercourse or body of water.” So all shoreline property owners around the lake are riparians, and as such, might be interested to know that there is a magazine designed just for those people, called The Michigan Riparian. It is published quarterly in Stanton, MI, by the Michigan Lakes and Streams Foundation, the non-profit organization that VELA sends a representative to each year to keep abreast of lake-related issues.

About a year ago, the magazine was contacted by VELA to see if they would be interested in featuring our lake in one of their issues and they were very receptive to the idea. Research into various aspects of what makes this lake so unique (history of logging era, the original dam, formation of the lake association, the watershed, Loud Island, etc.)

yielded a substantial manuscript which reached completion in time to be submitted for publication in the Summer 2016 issue, thanks in part to the efforts of Dan Stock and our webmaster, Tim Schafer.

Those in attendance at the fall general meeting all received a complimentary copy of the Riparian and more are available upon request by contacting Carole Plunkey at 739-8717 or email.

Well Water Contamination Issue

Testing for PFC's (perflourinated compounds) continues as the Township, Air Force (AF), Michigan Dept. of Health (MDHHS) and Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) all work together to ensure public safety in regards to possible contamination of wells located close to the old Wurtsmith AF base. MDHHS has recommended do not drink advisories essentially anywhere they believe there has been an impact from PFC's and those people affected have been given options for obtaining clean water.

Once data is gathered and evaluated, including the impact on fish in VanEtten and the Ausable, the next step will be to determine where remedial action is necessary to protect the public. Currently, there are no fish advisories for the lake related to PFC's. Standard “eat safe fish” rules still apply (brochures are available from VELA or Parks Library).

A Restoration Advisory Board is being set up by the AF which will most likely include a representative from VELA. A meeting to inform and update the public on this issue is scheduled to occur October 25 (time and place to be determined) and will be announced in the local paper. For more information, visit the District Health Dept. 2 [website www.dhd2.org](http://www.dhd2.org) and click on Wurtsmith Activities.

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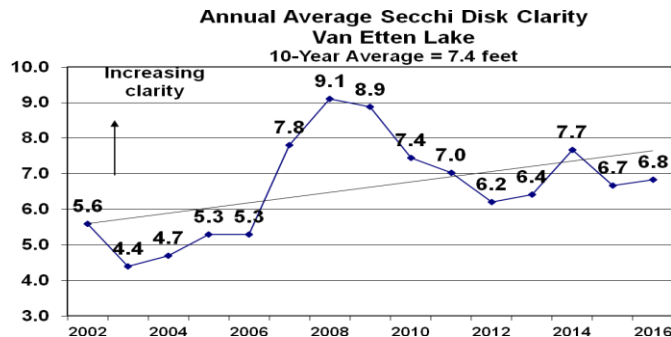
To place a business ad in the newsletter, please contact Carole at 739-8717

Water Quality Report

2016 VAN ETTEN LAKE WATER QUALITY RESULTS TO DATE

SECCHI DISK CLARITY

The average of the weekly clarity measurements taken for 2016 was **6.8 feet**. The average for the summer of 2015 was **6.7 feet**. The 10 year average is **7.4 feet**. The average water temperature mid-lake over the summer was 69.2 deg. F. This compares to a 10 year average of 68.4 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 2016 spring overturn phosphorus concentration was **28 parts per billion [ppb]**. This sample was taken on April 12. The comparable concentration in 2015 was **23 ppb**. The spring result is thought to be a good estimate of the average phosphorus concentration in the lake. A comparative sample taken at the outlet of the dam on April 17 was **26 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 results from the five monthly samples taken from May through September in 2016 are not yet available, but there was a significant algae bloom that occurred this year in August. A treatment to reduce the algae concentration lake wide was done in late August and appeared to reduce the concentrations over the Labor Day weekend. However the algae continued throughout the month of September.


Pine River Watershed Update: Two new programs began this season – one to measure water level referred to as “crowd hydrology” where anyone with a cell phone can text a measurement to a central call station and results are then posted online; and one to measure stream temperature by using digital loggers to gather data for review and possible action. These, along with the bi-annual Macro sampling program, are all in need of volunteers to assist with monitoring. To learn more about these programs, please try to attend one of the quarterly meetings held in Greenbush, fourth Thursday of the targeted month (January, April, July, October). Watershed information is also available on VELA website at www.vanettenlake.org and click on watershed.



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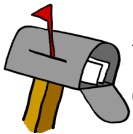
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Talks with the Township

VELA board members have been in discussion with the township superintendent and office of community development to address a few issues that impact lake residents and water quality, namely:

- Boat launch fees – tax-paying property owners do not feel they should also have to pay a boat launch fee to put their watercraft in each season and/or take it out. A couple of ideas have been presented whereby both parties would benefit from a change to this practice but no action can be taken until township board review – unsure when that will happen. Will most probably need to be addressed at a township work session.
- Point-of-sale septic system ordinance – in an attempt to be good stewards of the lake and also promote the safety and health of the community by ensuring the adequate disposal of sewage from homes having septic systems, a sample ordinance has been prepared for review, in cooperation with the Public Health Dept (PHD) This would set up regulations for the inspection of septic systems at the time homes are sold. There are many exemptions to this evaluation stipulated in the ordinance (for example, new homes, those with permits from the PHD, property transfers from family members, etc.) and further revision may need to be done. Further investigation by the township has been requested and VELA will be informed once data is obtained on next step in the process.
- Endowment fund expenditures – VELA has offered to utilize money from this fund to share in the cost of any township supported project which brings benefit to the lake (for example, a handicap ramp at the Ken Ratliff Park to allow fishing). Officials are very receptive to the offer and will inform the township board for further development.



VELA INBOX

Got Questions? Email joeplunkey@charter.net

Picnic Wrap-Up

August 6th was a beautiful day for a picnic and thank you to all who shared in the fun with our lake families! Every year, the picnic committee tries to make the event enjoyable, delicious, and welcoming, especially to new-comers. It is always amazing to taste all the special dishes that are brought to share and the committee tries to pick main dishes that are appetizing and plentiful.

As in previous years, the silent auction gifts were a big hit and the number of choices grows each year. Entertainment was directed at the kids this year, but adults as well enjoyed the "balloon lady and Cat in the Hat". Desserts were scrumptious (!) and someone went home with \$150 from the 50/50 drawing.

This year, a survey was emailed out to get feedback from members on what might be improved or added., hoping to attract even more folks to the annual party. The committee is always open to anyone who wishes to help them plan – contact Carole to sign on.

