

**PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. BOX 272**  
**HONOR, MICHIGAN 49640-0272**  
August 2, 2003

**THE STATE OF THE LAKE**

Platte Lake is experiencing its best year ever in terms of water clarity. The clarity has continued through the winter, spring and now into the summer. Secchi disk readings are the highest that we have observed since we started taking them in 1981! The lake is absolutely gorgeous! Please see attached Platte Lake Secchi Disk Readings. Everything seemed to go “right” this year. Low hatchery discharge, a lack of alewives, moderate as opposed to high temperatures, average rainfall and water flow into the lake, zebra mussels replacing the once abundant native clam population, etc.

As I stated last summer, a lot of very knowledgeable people had previously told us that we could never restore Platte Lake to its prior pristine beauty. They were wrong! Our objective now is to do whatever is necessary to ensure Platte Lake is never ever degraded again for any reason!

**CONSENT JUDGMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of the Consent Judgment continues to proceed in what I would characterize as an “outstanding” manner. The efforts of Dr. Canale, Implementation Coordinator and Gary Whelan, DNR Hatchery Operations Manager to keep continued the effort has been noteworthy. These people are committed to getting things done in spite of any and all bureaucratic entanglements. The DNR, PLIA and Implementation Coordinator “Team” are running on all cylinders:

- ◆ We have continued with our bi-weekly meetings/phone conferences with Gary Whelan, Dr. Canale and I at nominally two-week intervals since the last PLIA Annual meeting. Agendas and minutes were maintained for all meetings.
- ◆ Dr. Canale will be giving an update as to compliance with the Settlement Agreement at the meeting. As stated in the spring newsletter, the Hatchery was in compliance with the agreement except for the 75 lb three month phosphorus discharge target for August, September and October of 2002 which was 80.65 pounds and generated \$2500.00 in penalties that are in the watershed improvement account to be used for mutually agreeable watershed improvement projects.

Total Hatchery discharge was 206.21 lb P for 2002 and 67.14 lb P through June 30, 2003 as compared to 98.87 lb P through June 30, 2002.

- ◆ An extensive effort at CMU laboratory correlation and a complete de-bugging of the phosphorus water sample collection and analysis process was completed. Dr. Canale will go into this in greater detail in his presentation. The bottom line is that we have a solid laboratory in CMU, detailed sample collection and quality control and analysis procedures and have demonstrated exceptional low level measurement repeatability. The effort expended was long and frustrating, but the results satisfying.

- ◆ We also have a “Basins” watershed model completed by LimnoTech of Ann Arbor. The model was funded by the Platte River Watershed Grant that is being managed by the Benzie conservation district.
- ◆ A CMU graduate student is being funded by the DNR and is in process to quantify phosphorus settling and bottom sediment phosphorus release. The student is being directed by Dr. Canale. The data will be used to support the lake phosphorus model.
- ◆ Additionally, we have funded an \$8500 shore line and lake plant survey to quantify plant population, phosphorus content and growth rate to provide additional input to the lake phosphorus model. As part of that survey we have also been sampling the shore for bacteria and phosphorus discharge. We expect to report results at the end of the year.
- ◆ The Deadstream fish ladder is under construction and will be installed after Labor Day. Luedtke Engineering will be the contractor. The project is being directed by the Benzie county Drain Commission who is the owner of the Deadstream dam. The DNR is manufacturing brackets, etc. to mate an existing steep pass ladder with Luedtke’s weir modifications. The PLIA will be supplying \$12,500.00 towards the project. \$6500.00 from the DNR penalty account and the remained from contributions received earmarked for the project. The whole purpose is to re-establish the once abundant native northern pike population in Platte Lake. Their spawning habitat was severely restricted with the installation of the Deadstream lake level control dam in the 1960’s.

### **FISH PLANTING**

A result of a continued long term lobbying effort on the part of Jerry Heiman, the DNR planted 180,000 northern pike fry April 3, 2003 and 63,000 walleye fingerlings June 3, 2003. The previous walleye plants appear to have been successful as people are reported catching 6-7 inch walleye mixed in with the perch and rock bass along the weed beds. Hopefully these continued plants along with our other efforts will help restore the once abundant native fishery in Platte Lake.

### **ZEBRA MUSSELS**

The Zebra Mussel invasion of Platte Lake is continuing. They appear to have colonized on nearly every rock, empty clam shell and log in the lake. They are helping water clarity as did the once abundant native clam population that has all but disappeared. We need to continue efforts at lowering phosphorus as the zebra mussels are not permanent residents. They have been dying off in the great lakes. How long they will remain in Platte Lake is a matter of speculation.

### **PLATTE LAKE SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

As a follow up to last year’s presentation, Jerry Heiman was able to assemble the following information on alternative septic systems. Benzie County Health Dept. regulations now allow alternative septic disposal systems on sites not suitable for standard septic and drain field if they have at least 12" of suitable soils and enough square ft. area for a larger drain field. Phosphorus and nitrogen requirements if within 500' of water are extremely stringent and only one system at present is able to meet requirement by ion exchange reaction, made by Advantix. Total processing equipment cost is \$16,000. Plan must be done by a qualified engineering firm. Total

cost with construction supervision about \$6,000. Estimate by excavator/installer with required new septic tank about \$ 9,000. Permit fees about \$ 800. Total cost with currently available technology about \$32,000. Costs may come down in future years with development of new and more competitive equipment.

### **PLATTE LAKE ENDOWMENT FUND**

As mentioned at the last annual Meeting, the level of funding for water sampling, analysis, etc. as a result of our Settlement Agreement is \$150K/year. That funding will stop once hatchery renovation is complete and the DNR has demonstrated compliance to the agreed upon discharge standard of 175 lb P/yr for five continuous years. We expect that to happen in the 2009 to 2010 time frame. At that time all lake monitoring, etc. will be our responsibility.

Based on our assessment of stock market conditions, we have elected not to establish the endowment fund with an independent body and essentially lose control of how the money is invested. We have decided to maintain the funds in federally insured accounts until better market conditions become better defined. As a result, we have not made as much as we might possibly be able to have, but we have not lost a dime! Bruce Stowe will be discussing what we have done to preserve capital. In the mean time, we desperately need any and all ideas and investment advice on how to grow our capital in the most secure and at the same time yield the highest returns.

In the mean time, we are still open to accept donations of all types, i.e. cash, stock, property etc. and allow it to grow tax free with the dedicated purpose of funding the PLIA future water monitoring costs. We will be looking forward to your direct input at the meeting.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR PLATTE LAKE?**

Some things all of you can do now:

1. Stop lawn fertilization! If you must fertilize, **use phosphorus free lawn fertilizer**. It can be purchased locally. If you cannot find it, contact us.
2. Remove all beach debris, leaves, etc. and deposit on a back lot, etc. so they cannot re-enter the lake. This is best done in the fall and again in the spring after ice out.
3. Have your septic tank pumped yearly if you are a full time resident.
4. If you are a season resident, use RV antifreeze for winterizing toilets and drain traps. Do not use ethylene glycol based automotive anti-freeze. It is toxic.
5. Maintain green belts at the lake edge so as to discourage erosion and run off.
6. Use Lake Water to water lawns and gardens. It is high in nitrogen.
7. Encourage your neighbors to do all of the above.
8. Visit new neighbors and encourage them to help us by joining the PLIA.

Again, we all can do something to directly help restore and maintain Platte Lake.

## SUMMARY

The lake is nothing short of gorgeous and our past efforts have been rewarded. We need you to actively do the things that will minimize your phosphorus input to the lake and get your neighbors who are not PLIA members to become PLIA members and actively do what they can to reduce their phosphorus input to the lake! Also, do not forget to send dues and any contributions, as we always need money. This is especially critical for the PLIA to be able to continue efforts in the future when the Settlement Agreement funding ends.

Also in closing, I must again say that I am extremely proud and thankful for the effort expended by your Officers, Board and membership at large. Collectively they had spend hundreds of hours in meetings representing the PLIA, membership recruiting, collecting lake data, collecting river data, fall salmon run fish counting, processing and analyzing data, writing reports, processing e-mail and most importantly performing vital administrative tasks that allow the Platte Lake Improvement Association to continue to exist. We have a great organization! Let us keep moving forward

Thank You,

Wilfred J. Swiecki  
President, PLIA

P. S. If there are any questions, comments or concerns please raise them during the meeting.  
If issues arise at a later date, please feel free to call me:

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