

**PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. BOX 272**  
**HONOR, MICHIGAN 49640-0272**  
August 7, 2004

**THE STATE OF THE LAKE**

Platte Lake is again experiencing its best year ever in terms of water clarity. 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. We feel that there are two major contributing factors: lower phosphorus level as compared to 2003 and an increase in the zebra mussel population. Also, hatchery discharge through mid-July 2004 was 40.69 lb P! A marked reduction from last year and earlier years!

As I stated for the past two summers, 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! A lot of what we do next will be up to individual lakeside property owners and county wide efforts to reduce phosphorus loading in the upstream watershed.

**CONSENT JUDGMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of the Consent Judgment continues to proceed in an “outstanding” manner. The efforts of Dr. Canale, Implementation Coordinator and Gary Whelan, DNR Hatchery Operations Manager are to be commended. The DNR, PLIA and Implementation Coordinator “Team” is functioning well and continues to be rational, focused and responsive:

- ◆ 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 are maintained for all meetings.
- ◆ Gary Whelan will be giving a presentation on the Hatchery renovation and related issues since the last meeting i.e. accidental construction release of approx. 60 lb P in July of 2003 and the late winter die off of approx. 458,000 yearling coho. The Hatchery construction period is complete and we have begun the three year test period phase of the Settlement Agreement as of June 30, 2004. Following the three year test period, we will enter into a five year compliance period at the final discharge limits of 175 lb P/year and a maximum of 55 lb P in any consecutive three month period.
- ◆ Dr. Canale will be presenting Settlement Agreement and related project and investigation status at the meeting. As stated in the spring newsletter, the Hatchery was in compliance with a 2003 discharge of 168.7 lb P. They were in violation of the 75 lb P three month discharge for August 84.20 lb P and September 90.00 lb P. Additionally, there were flow violations on September 10 through September 13, 2003 of 26.64 million gallons per day (MGD) versus the 20 MGD limit during a construction test.
- ◆ Our extensive effort at CMU laboratory correlation last year has paid off and we feel we are obtaining “solid” data. Quality control procedures have been implemented not only in the laboratory, but also in the sample collection process in the field.

- ◆ A new Access data base has been developed and implemented by PLIA member Jim Berridge. The data base has been a key enabler in the rapid analysis of the voluminous amount of data collected. Once the data is entered, over 100 graphs, charts and tables are updated automatically. Our many thanks to Jim for his development of the data base and for his ongoing updating and management.
- ◆ Michael Holmes, a CMU graduate student, is continuing with his investigation of Platte Lake bottom sediments and related oxygen consumption and phosphorus release. He is being funded by the DNR. Dr. Canale will highlight progress during his presentation. The data will be used to support the lake phosphorus model.
- ◆ The Deadstream fish ladder was constructed last fall and is in operation. The total cost was \$12,800 which was funded from the DNR Penalty account which is targeted for mutually agreed upon DNR/PLIA watershed improvements.

### **2003 PLATTE LAKE SHORELINE SURVEY**

A complete Platte Lake shoreline survey was completed in June and September 2003. The survey was performed as a follow up to the 1981 shoreline survey that was performed with the "Septic Snooper" by Swanson Environmental as part of the clean Water Grant which the PLIA funded the local portion. In 2003, we sampled 70 shoreline sites in June and September for phosphorus, e-coli bacteria and cladophra (a filamental algae that clings to rocks and solid objects). A copy will be available for review at the Annual Meeting. We did find some "hot spots" that need attention and urge you to review the "hot spots" identified that may be near your property. We have GPS coordinates and pictures. It is our desire to work with the residents in any way we can to further investigate and eliminate any potential problems

The study also provides insight into how we must manage our lakeshore to reduce phosphorus. The results did not indicate any statistical difference for phosphorus emissions from different shoreline types. Thus we must emphasize again the importance of cleaning the beach of any material that may decay, re-enter and re-introduce phosphorus into the water as well as harvesting and bagging all weed and grass periodically and most importantly in the fall before they begin to decay. We recommend leaving the root structure and depositing the harvested vegetation to an upland/back lot where it cannot re-enter the lake. This also applies to tree leaves, etc. Other than stopping all fertilization and ensuring septic systems are working properly and up to code, as well as correcting any erosion problems, this is the most important thing you as a lakeside resident can do to reduce the phosphorus load to the lake. It is projected that we could potentially reduce lake phosphorus loading by as much as 400 lb P if everyone implemented these recommendations! Think about it. We must start doing our individual and collective part to reduce phosphorus loading. The hatchery is in compliance!

### **FISH PLANTING**

130,000 0.64 inch northern pike were planted May 12, 2004 in the north branch of the Platte River. Hopefully, some will survive and utilize the Deadstream fish ladder to spawn when they become adults. Also, in an effort to increase the forage base for the game fish population, the

DNR netted 53 long nose gar this spring along the north shore of the lake. They expect to repeat the event next spring. Many thanks to Tom Rozich, DNR and Jan Sapak, DNR and their respective teams for arranging and carrying out the effort.

### **ZEBRA MUSSELS**

The Zebra Mussel invasion of Platte Lake is continuing. We have commissioned Meg Woller a biologist working with the Leelanau Conservancy and co-author of the report on the 2003 Platte Lake Shoreline Survey to perform a zebra mussel study on Platte Lake. The study will attempt to quantify the number and age groups of zebra mussels in the lake to determine whether or not the population is increasing and at what rate. The study is presently "in progress" and we expect a report later in the year. I must note that part of the increase in water clarity is due to zebra mussels which have replaced a once abundant native clam population. The zebra mussels will not be at a maximum level forever. They will decline and when they do, we must have reduced the overall phosphorus load to the lake. Otherwise, lake water clarity will decrease. How long they will remain abundant in Platte Lake is a matter of speculation.

### **PLATTE LAKE FOAM**

We have spent considerable effort trying to develop a game plan to ascertain what are the major causal factors behind the increase in Platte Lake foam. All we can say with any certainty is that the foam if naturally occurring, is a result of the decomposition of organic material i.e. animal, plant, insect, etc. that contains protein or fats. That just about includes everything that grows. We have observed foam on all area lakes and rivers to varying degrees. Our objective is to minimize it once we understand the causal factors. We are still investigating. Be advised there is precious little in the literature and we are essentially to the best of our knowledge "plowing fresh ground" If anyone has any detailed scientific insight, please contact us.

### **PLATTE LAKE SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

As stated last year, 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. Please contact the Health Department for site specific information. Jerry Heiman's alternate system is expected to be installed shortly. We will pass on more information as it becomes available.

### **DRAFT BENZIE COUNTY BUFFER ZONE ORDINANCE**

Copies of the proposed Draft Ordinance will be distributed at the Annual Meeting. A pdf copy is available on the PLIA web site [www.platte-lake.org](http://www.platte-lake.org). As mentioned in the newsletter, this is serious stuff and if enacted will impact the use of your property. We feel the Ordinance as written will not reduce the immediate drainage phosphorus load to Platte Lake i.e. the component from lakeside residences. As stated early we need to harvest vegetation as opposed to establishment of permanent lakeside buffer zones as require by the Ordinance. We feel the ordinate is fine as it applies to rivers and creeks as it related to erosion, but does not help in phosphorus reduction around inland lakes where erosion is not a primary concern.

We also have a Court Order which sets the phosphorus level in Platte Lake at 8.0 ug/l 95% of the time. We are not in compliance with the standard and must do all we can to ensure attainment.

That standard is not recognized in the ordinance. The draft ordinance also does not speak to a phosphate fertilization ban.

Personnel from the Benzie County Planning Department will be at the annual Meeting to discuss the history behind the ordinance, etc. and the process by which it may be amended, etc. It is our desire to work directly with the Benzie County Planning Commission so that any ordinance is a positive for Platte Lake in terms of phosphorus reduction.

Your position on this draft ordinance must be ascertained during the Annual Meeting in order for appropriate follow up action can be taken by your Board of Directors

### **ENDOWMENT FUND**

A managed endowment fund has not been established as your Officers and Board felt that the risk to capital has been too great. Funds are presently in federally insured accounts until the investment climate improves.

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 have an erosion problem, maintain a green belt at the waters edge to help in an effort to control the problem. When you harvest the green belt to remove phosphorus via deposition on a back lot, etc., ensure that you leave the root structure.
5. Use Lake Water to water lawns and gardens. It is high in nitrogen. It will remove phosphorus from the lake.
6. Encourage your neighbors to do all of the above.
7. Visit new neighbors and encourage them to help us by joining the PLIA.
8. 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.

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

## SUMMARY

We have a great lake. It is well on its way toward restoration. We all need to look in the mirror and do our part. Each and every one of you must do something. The time to wait for someone else to do something has passed. It is up to us on an individual and collective basis. 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.

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, delivering water samples, 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:

Lake: 231-325-2046 Down State: 248-553-3110 e-mail: [wswiecki@twmi.rr.com](mailto:wswiecki@twmi.rr.com)