

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

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[www.platte-lake.org](http://www.platte-lake.org)

**THE STATE OF THE LAKE**

Platte Lake water clarity is down slightly from 2005 and way off from our record year of 2004. Hatchery discharge year to date is approx. 73 lb P which is below last year when we were at approx. 104 lb P. This is a marked improvement and we expect the phosphorus discharge next year to be even lower. Hopefully we can begin to approach the clarity levels seen in 2004.....our goal.

The bottom line is that we still have to further reduce phosphorus levels from all sources. I am pleased to say that the Hatchery is on the right track to achieve the court mandated 175 lb P per year beginning July 1, 2007. Additionally, they are actively engaged in an effort to even further reduce their discharge. The pressure is on for each of us to reduce our individual phosphorus contributions i.e. septic systems, lawn fertilization, beach cleanup, etc.

I must say, we have also gained some significant insight into the dynamics of Platte Lake water clarity i.e. the lakes ability to change from 21 ft to 10 ft in a week, etc. We don't have all the answers as of yet, but we are getting closer. New studies and intensive ongoing data analysis are leading the way.

**CONSENT JUDGMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

I cannot say enough about how well our interaction with the DNR on the implementation of the Consent Judgment is progressing. I continue to be impressed. The efforts of Dr. Canale, Implementation Coordinator and Gary Whelan, DNR Hatchery Operations Manager are to be commended.

The team continues to meet bi-weekly with agenda and minutes. We are now in our third year of the three year test period that began June 30, 2004. When that expires June 30, 2007, the hatchery will go into the five year compliance period where phosphorus discharge limits will change from 225 lb P/yr to 175 lb P/yr and the three month maximum discharge will be reduced from the current 70 lb P per 3 months to 55 lb P per 3 months.

The DNR experienced three violations last year which generated a total of \$8500.00 in fines. I don't expect any violations going forward as we are in the last year of the three year test period. Production at the hatchery has been reduced and as mention earlier, active efforts at further reducing hatchery discharge are being pursued. The goal is to try and get an additional 50% phosphorus discharge reduction.

Additionally, Dr. Canale has developed a "bio-energetic" model that can be used as a tool to optimize hatchery operation to further reduce discharge from planned levels.

## **LAKE ASSOCIATION FINANCES**

As you have heard me speak in the past, after the five year compliance period ends in 2012, the DNR funding of the lake and river sampling plan will cease. As a result of the Settlement Agreement, we are presently responsible for only 2% of the cost. The 2004 spending was \$162,500+ of which we paid \$3250. An invoice for 2005 has not been received from the DNR. I suspect the costs approached \$200,000 in 2005. Be advised most everything else has been donated labor, etc.

The bottom line is that at our current dues rate of \$15.00/year, we are collecting approximately \$5000/yr. Additional contributions are averaging about \$14,000 per year. We will need more capital to afford even a subset of our efforts when the Settlement Agreement funding expires in 2012. That is six years from now. If the DNR violates its agreement, the five year compliance period resets and their funding continues for five years from the date of the violation. I cannot plan on that happening.

We desperately need ideas to raise significant amounts of capital. We have brought up the idea of property donations for those who not have any heirs. Another idea is to donate an insurance policy or a subset of a policy. There are many potential tax advantages in doing that and we have several contacts in the business who have offered to help answer questions, explain options, etc. It can be as simple as a beneficiary charge or more complex. Please get back to us and we will do everything we can to help you in setting up your donation.

As a first step, we need to increase our dues. The \$15.00 annual PLIA dues have been in effect since 1986....20 years. Inflation notwithstanding, I must say we have been one of the most cost effective organizations when it comes to getting things done, but there are limits. Just reflect on what has happened to Platte Lake property values since 1986 due in no small part to a restoration of the lake! We will address this subject during the Annual Meeting.

Bottom line, without an increase in our capital, our effectiveness is going to diminish with time. We need your financial support.

Additionally, David Fuhrhop, PLIA Board Member, has done some intensive investigation into the benefits of a foundation, etc. The costs and reporting requirements of a foundation plus loss of some control over funds does not make sense in our current financial condition.

## **PLATTE LAKE PROJECTS**

In addition to our ongoing lake and river sampling plans, we have embarked on two new projects. The first being the calibration of the recently developed "Basins" model for the upstream watershed. The model was developed by LimnoTech of Ann Arbor, MI under a grant obtained by the Benzie Conservation District for a cost of \$50,000. We have moved forward with having LimnoTech calibrate the model for \$35,000. Half of which will be paid from accumulated DNR penalty funds and the other half with direct PLIA funds. The calibrated model will give us a user friendly "hands on" tool to evaluate land use changes, etc. and their potential impact on Platte Lake and the 8.0 ug/l phosphorus standard.

Additionally, Dr. Scott McNaught of CMU is soliciting graduate student candidates to perform a phosphorus “bio-availability” study of Platte River Watershed phosphorus sources to identify which sources may be more likely to promote algal growth than others. This information is critical in identifying where we need to concentrate our efforts to mitigate/eliminate the sources most damaging to the lake.

### **PLATTE LAKE FISH MANAGEMENT**

There have been no walleye or northern pike plants in or upstream of Platte Lake in 2006. Conversation with Tom Rozich, DNR District Fish Biologist responsible for Platte Lake indicates that he does not intend to plant walleye until 2007. Fishing by all anecdotal accounts appears to be good. I have heard of good catches of small mouth bass, walleye, perch and rock bass. A few reports of large northern pike and trophy sized catfish. There was no long nose gar netting in 2006. The population on the north shore is down markedly from last year. Where one would always see ten or fifteen or more, we now see one or none.

As of this writing, we still do not have mercury data on the fish sampled in 2005. We have received preliminary PCB contaminant data and it is as follows per Joseph Bohr, MDEQ: “The PCB concentrations in the five rock bass were all at or below the quantification limit of 0.001 ppm. The concentration in the 1 walleye sampled was also low at 0.008 ppm (it is unusual for walleye to have elevated concentrations.) Concentrations in the 2 smallmouth bass were both 0.100 ppm, which would lead to an advisory recommending women and children eat no more than 1 meal per week. PCB concentration in the channel catfish were measured at 0.42 & 0.63 ppm, putting them in the W & C – 1 meal per month category.”

We will post the mercury data on the PLIA web page as soon as we receive it.

### **FALL SALMON RUN**

Last year a total of 14,735 coho adults, 579 coho jacks, 570 chinook adults and 35 chinook jacks were passed upstream. 11,707 coho adults, 480 coho jacks, 94 chinook adults and 1 chinook jacks were received and harvested at the upstream hatchery. All within the 20,000 adult coho and 1000 adult chinook limits of the Settlement Agreement. Many thanks to Tom Inman for his continued effort at representing the PLIA during lower weir fish passage.

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

As you remember from last year, the PLIA’s language was incorporated verbatim into the Lake Township Buffer ordinance in the form of what is now titled the Platte Lakes Area Management Plan. The document is available on the PLIA WEB site [www.platte-lake.org](http://www.platte-lake.org). The ordinance is in effect. The Benzie County Planning Commission has now circulated a draft ordinance for Benzie County which has a section for the inclusion of the Platte Lakes Area Management Plan. The Draft ordinance is out for comments until September 14, 2006. We are preparing comments and also have been invited to participate on a committee to review submitted comments. It is our objective to have the present Platte Lakes Area Management Plan adopted for the Benzonia Township portion of Platte Lake and get as many of our phosphorus reduction measures adopted in the Benzie County Water Bodies plan. A copy of the proposed Benzie County Document will be posted on the PLIA Web site.

## PLATTE LAKE SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Bill Crawford, Benzie-Leelanau County Sanitarian and member of the Michigan Onsite Wastewater Task force, has had one public meeting on July 21, 2006 and is holding another on August 19, 2006. The meetings are to assess the local interest in the potential of cluster septic systems as opposed to holding tanks. The group is supported by the Joyce Foundation which is willing to grant low interest rate loans for up front planning and engineering design. The loans will be forgiven if construction begins no later than three years after the planning and design are complete. Bill will be at the meeting to explain in detail. Additionally, Heather Brady and Brent Gordie of Gordie Fraser, a Traverse City Engineering firm will present some alternate and cluster systems that they have built, provide some “ball park” cost estimates and answer questions.

Some thought joggers for those who may be considering this are: What are the total construction cost likely to be? What are the operating, maintenance and monitoring costs? What are the individual property owner liabilities? etc.

The PLIA’s concern is to ensure that whatever is done can be monitored to see if in fact the system is doing its job and not contributing phosphorus and or biological or other contaminants to Platte Lake.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR PLATTE LAKE?

As stated last year, there are things all of you can do now:

1. Stop lawn fertilization! If you must fertilize, **use phosphorus free lawn fertilizer**. If you have a lawn service, tell them.
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. If you burn large amounts of brush near the waters edge, pick up the ashes and deposit them where they cannot re-enter the lake. If you do not, you are contributing phosphorus and other plant nutrients to the lake.
4. Have your septic tank pumped yearly if you are a full time resident.
5. **If you have an erosion problem....FIX IT!** Maintain a green belt at the waters edge in an effort to help control the problem. When you harvest the green belt to remove phosphorus, deposit the material on a back lot, etc. so that the decayed vegetation cannot re-enter the lake. Also, ensure that you leave the root structure when cutting so you do not kill the plants.
6. Use Lake Water to water lawns and gardens. It is high in nitrogen and it will remove phosphorus from the lake.
7. Encourage your neighbors to do all of the above.
8. Visit new neighbors and encourage them to help us by joining the PLIA. We need everyone who uses the lake involved.
9. If you are a seasonal 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. We are well on our 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 long 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 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. Their dedicated effort on behalf of Platte Lake is note worthy.

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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