

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

August 2, 2008

www.platte-lake.org

THE STATE OF THE LAKE

Platte Lake water clarity for the first half of the year set a record! 29 ft! It is the highest since the PLIA began extensive monitoring in 1980. We feel this is due to a very low phosphorus level in the beginning of the year and exceptionally cool water temperatures. Since that time we have seen a marked decline that appears to be mainly due to marl precipitation caused by rapidly increasing surface water temperatures along with available phosphorus for algae production. Dr. Canale will be present to discuss the issue in detail.

Hatchery phosphorus is within discharge limits and YTD at 90.76 lbs of Phosphorus on a 175 lb P yearly limit. Any further phosphorus reductions have to come from other sources entering Platte Lake i.e. reduced erosion and runoff, cessation of lawn fertilization, proper cutting of lakeside grass and vegetation, beach clean up, etc. These are not Hatchery related issues. They are lakeside resident and watershed issues.

I mentioned last year, the dynamics of this lake extremely volatile. Going from 29 ft Secchi depth to 9 ft in three weeks is absolutely amazing! Little things can make big differences.

CONSENT JUDGMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Consent Judgment is progressing. We continue to have exemplary cooperation from Gary Whelan, DNR Hatchery Operations Manager.

The team continues to meet bi-weekly with agenda and minutes. We have just completed our first year of the Five Year Compliance period per the Settlement Agreement. There was a violation of the three month discharge limit of 55 lb P in October and November of 2007. This resulted in \$11,000 of fines that will be deposited into the Penalty Account to be used for lake/watershed improvements. This also technically restarted the Five Year Compliance Period that began July 1, 2007 to December 1, 2007. The DNR is reviewing this as we are pushing for agreement to the restart now as opposed to five years from now. We will discuss our options during the meeting.

Dr. Canale's "bio-energetic" model that can be used as a tool to optimize hatchery operation to further reduce discharge from planned levels is being reviewed in detail by the DNR.

HATCHERY DISCHARGE PERMIT

The Department of Environmental Quality issued a strange letter on June 27, 2008 requesting the DNR to use a different automated sampler than the one the permit limits were based on. The letter came as a surprise to all parties and was not asked for by the DNR. The DEQ has not answered our questions and the individual who made the recommendation retired shortly thereafter. The issue and our response will be discussed at the meeting.

FALL SALMON RUN

Thanks to the efforts of Tom Inman and his PLIA helpers who count fish passed by the lower weir in addition to DNR personnel, the fall salmon run continued to comply with Settlement Agreement limits. 19019 Adult coho and 260 adult Chinook were passed upstream. Both are in compliance with their respect 20,000 and 1000 limits.

FISH PLANTINGS AND BASS TOURNAMENTS

There were no fish plantings in Platte Lake in the past year. Additionally there has been interest in regulation how bass tournament are regulated on the lake. Jerry Heiman will give an update as to potential future plantings and status on Bass tournaments.

LAKE AND WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT IDEAS

The DNR/PLIA "Penalty Fund" which collects the money from DNR Settlement Agreement violations is designated to be used specifically for lake and watershed improvement projects. We will be asking for your input on lake and watershed improvements you would like to see.

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. Spending on the lake and river sampling plan has been \$200+ for several years. Costs for just water sampling analysis for the lake and watershed are \$40,000+ for 2008. This does not include collection and data analysis.

The dues have increased to \$50.00 which has increased our balance sheet. Additionally we are also beginning to receive "gifts" as a result of Estate liquidations as people "pass on". Please remember Platte Lake in your "Estate Planning". We are an IRS 501C3 organization. Contributions are deductible on your Federal Income Tax return.

PLATTE LAKE PROJECTS

In addition to our ongoing lake and river sampling plans and specific investigations related to those specific activities, we have two major projects going. The first is the implementation of the Platte River Watershed BASINs model which provides direct input into land use planning and it ultimate impact on the Platte Lake 8.0 ug/l phosphorus standard. We are working with the Benzie County Soil Erosion Agent in an effort to get the model involved in land use planning decisions. The second is the Bio-Availability project with Central Michigan University to quantify the reactivity of the phosphorus from various watershed sources and their ultimate impact on Platte Lake i.e. not all contributors to the total lake phosphorus load have the same impact.

DRAFT BENZIE COUNTY BUFFER ZONE ORDINANCE

As you remember from last several years, 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. The ordinance is in effect. We have been working with Jim Sheets, Benzonia Township Supervisor and Craig Seger, Benzie County Soil and Erosion control Agent to get the Benzonia Township portion of Platte Lake under the same zoning as the Lake Township portion and incorporate the phosphate fertilization ban for the entire lake along with lakeside buffer strip management. Hopefully this can be accomplished this year.

PLATTE LAKE SEPTIC SYSTEMS

PLIA Member Ed McIntosh has been working with a group of south shore residents in an effort to get off holding tanks, failed systems and on a community system. Ed will be presenting status of his project at the meeting.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR PLATTE LAKE?

As reprinted from previous years, 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 off.
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. The 29 ft Secchi depth readings speak for themselves as to what can be attained! We are aggressively working on how to keep it from going to 9 ft or less. It is a long slow, tedious and often frustrating effort. But, we have individually and collectively shown that we have the perseverance required. We are not going to stop now and we are not going to allow anything or anyone or any organization marginalize our gains or mitigate our effort. 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. This sounds like last year and it is. Nothing has changed. We remain focused. That is the only way this task will be accomplished.

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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