

Bear Lake News

Newsletter from the Bear Lake—Lake Board

Produced by PLM Lake & Land Management Corp.

The Bear Lake Lake Board is a government entity established under the Michigan Natural Resources & Environmental Act, Act 451 of 1994 - Part 309. This board is in place to carry out improvements to Bear Lake, located in Muskegon County Michigan.

Bear Lake Important Updates

- Continued partnership with GVSU's Annis Water Resource Institute for water quality testing, consulting, and Lake Report. Overall, Bear Lake continues to improve with respect to phosphorus concentrations, but specific sources (isolated deep spots and Fenner's Ditch) require more attention. Also, additional efforts may be necessary to address algal abundance.
- Added an additional special project with GVSU for extra monitoring of the two major tributaries into Bear Lake. The data indicate that inflows from Bear Creek actually serve to dilute the phosphorus concentration in Bear Lake. Whereas inflows from Fenner's Ditch appear to contribute phosphorus to the lake.
- Contracted with GVSU for another special project focusing on the Fenner's Ditch area for sediment analysis to determine if high phosphorus is only from inflows, or if it is being stirred up from the lake bottom.
- Continued contract with PLM for lake management support and invasive plant and algae treatments.
- Conducted three Phoslock treatments in Fenner's Ditch and the isolated deep spots on the lake to bind to phosphorus and seal it at the lake bottom. Fenner's Ditch continues to see improvements in water quality.
- Tracking Fenner's Ditch specific expenses separately to better understand costs to keep water quality in this hotspot as high as possible.
- Conducted the first native plant treatment in 2023, where native plants were very dense (due to invasive plants being controlled). This very targeted treatment was supported by GVSU and within EGLE guidelines. The treatment focused on immediate shoreline and dock areas where the plants were creating a severe nuisance. This single treatment was highly successful.
- Darrell Van Fossan stepped down as Chairperson and Riparian Representative after many years of dedication to Bear Lake. Thank you, Darrell!
- Accepted applications for replacement Riparian Representative, and appointed Jim Panici as the new Riparian Representative. Welcome, Jim!
- Completed another year utilizing funds collected during the initial 5-year assessment without the need for additional assessments.
- Board position changes including Paul Pek taking over as Chairperson, with Jim Panici taking over as Vice Chair. Craig Howell continues as Treasurer, and Brenda Moore as Secretary.
- The BLLB is considering joining the EGLE/MiCorps Cooperative Lake Monitoring Program utilizing volunteers for additional water quality monitoring.



A natural shoreline along Bear Lake that helps buffer nutrients.



Bear Lake Lake Board
Upcoming Meeting

December 12, 2024 @ 6pm

Location: North Muskegon City Hall

Get Added to the BLLB Contact List

Go out to www.bllb.org and click on the link to fill out a form to be added to the contact list.

Email one of the BLLB board members with your name, address, email(s), and text number(s) (if you want text updates for treatments only). See **BLLB.org** for contact information.

Septic Systems

Did you know... That you are responsible for the maintenance and operation of your septic system? Did you know if your septic system is malfunctioning you could be polluting Bear Lake? Did you know that maintaining your system protects your investment in your property? Did you know that you should periodically inspect and pump out your septic system?

If your septic system isn't maintained you might need to replace it which can cost thousands of dollars. A malfunctioning system can contaminate ground water that might be your drinking water source. If you are planning to sell your home the septic system MUST be in good working order.

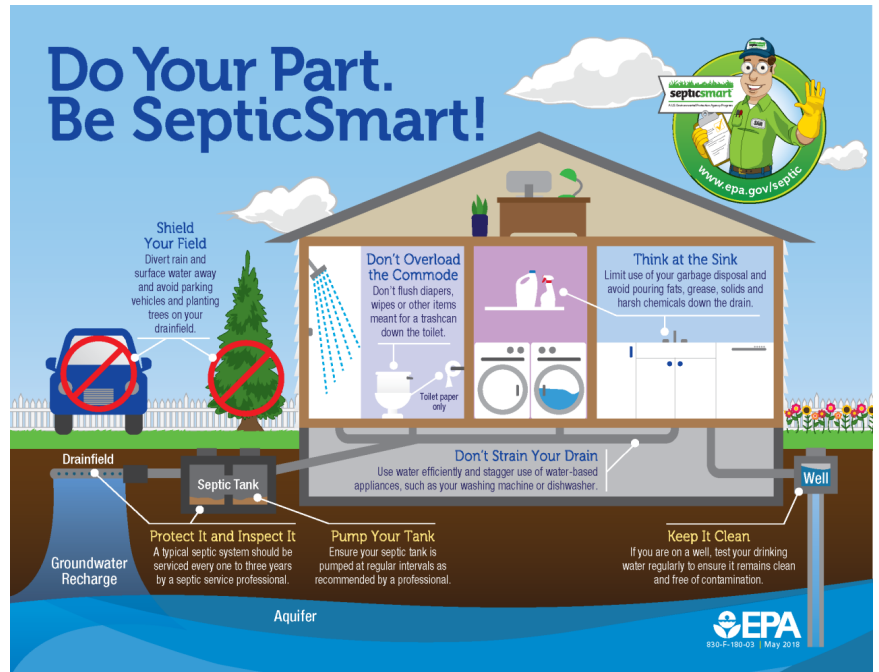
Protect your septic system.

1. Inspect your system (every three years) and pump your tank as necessary, at least every 3-5 years.
2. Efficiently use water in your household.
3. Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
4. Care for your drain field. Avoid driving or parking vehicles on your drain field. Plant only grass over your drain field to avoid damage from roots.

For more information contact your local health department or visit www.epa.gov/own/onsite

Septic Replacement Information:

<https://michigansaves.org/septic>



What is Phragmites

It is a perennial grass that is widespread throughout North America often found in wetlands, ditches, streams, and ponds. While Michigan has a native Phragmites that occurs in small patches, there is also a subspecies that is highly invasive.

Phragmites negatively impacts the natural environment by outcompeting native plants and wildlife by blocking sunlight. It can also eliminate habitats for fish, invertebrates, and water birds. It also can block the view of the shoreline and make accessing the water difficult.

This invasive species is believed to have been brought over by ballast water between the late 1700's and early 1800's and has hybridized with our native species.

Phragmites reeds can grow up to 18 feet tall, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. These plants have an extensive rhizome root system that grows both horizontally and vertically. This plant reproduces by clonal growth abilities and also has large fluffy seed heads that are spread by wind and water, producing up to 2,000 seeds a year on a single seed head.

Additional information: www.muskegoncd.org, 231-828-5097



Picture courtesy of Michigan Sea Grant

Lake Board Members

Paul Pek: Chairperson, Laketon Township Representative, paul.pek.blb@gmail.com

Jim Panici: Vice Chair, Laketon Township Representative, james.panici.blb@gmail.com

Craig Howell: Treasurer, North Muskegon Representative, craig.howell.blb@gmail.com

January 2025 Stephanie Barrett: Water Resources Commissioner, Muskegon County

Jessica Cook: Muskegon County Commissioner cookje@muskegoncounty.net

BLLB Financials

Current cash and investment accounts are ~\$210,000 and the average annual expenses are \$80,000 - \$90,000. This will be enough funds to last 2025—2026, at which time a new assessment will be needed. Additional info can be found at BLLB.org



Recommended Actions to Avoid Spreading Aquatic Invasive Species

CLEAN boats, trailers & equipment
DRAIN live wells and bilges
DRY boats and equipment
DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash
NOT the lake

Improved Resident Communications

- **BLLB.org:** The BLLB has its own website! This site has lake board information like meeting and treatment dates, board packets, meeting minutes, and in the future will be enhanced to include lake education. Website: www.bllb.org
- **BLLB Facebook Group:** Used in conjunction with website for events and notifications. [Facebook.com/BearLakeLakeBoard](https://www.facebook.com/BearLakeLakeBoard)
- **Email Updates:** Residents to sign up to receive automatic communications. www.bllb.org/signup-form/
- **Treatment Notification:** Residents of the City of North Muskegon will be notified via the Nixle system currently used by NM for urgent notifications. All City and Laketon Township residents can opt-in to email or text notifications for treatment. www.bllb.org/signup-form/
- **Treatment Maps:** Maps indicating what areas of the lake are/were treated. Maps can be found on the main page of the website, www.bllb.org

Lake Issue Reporting Protocol

- The BLLB has a new treatment protocol which will allow the authorization of treatment quickly after reported issues start coming in, avoiding delays in treatment.
- If you notice any issues with the condition of our Lake-front, please contact one of the following BLLB members: Paul Pek, Jim Panici or Craig Howell. (See **BLLB.org** for contact information).
- The preferred method is an email with a description of your issue, a photo of it, as well as your address.

DNR Wake Boat Report

The DNR released its final report on the impacts of wake boats to our inland lakes and fisheries. Based on the water quality concerns (i.e. damage to shorelines, bottomlands, and fish habitat) found in their study, recommendations have been made for all boaters. Also, bipartisan legislation has been introduced that, if approved, will greatly change the way these types of boats are used in the state. Contact your legislators, Sen. Jon Bumstead: SenJBumstead@senate.michigan.gov, Rep. Will Snyder: WillSnyder@house.mi.gov with your comments.

MDNR recommends the following:

- * Boats operating in wake-surfing mode or wake-boarding mode are recommended to operate at least 500 feet from docks or the shoreline, regardless of water depth.
- * Boats operating in wake-surfing or wake-boarding modes are recommended to operate in water at least 15 feet deep.

Based on these recommendations, there are no appropriate areas to wake boat on Bear Lake.

The full DNR report can be found at: mymlsa.org

