



TLPA Kicks Off Torch Lake Water Quality Study

The time has come. As the sun warmed and the trees pushed out their leaves, we began our comprehensive study of Torch Lake’s water quality.

We installed stream gages at Clam River near The Dockside and at the bridge at Torch River to record water elevation, water velocity, and water volume. In the past, “average flow rates” were typically measured, but now we’ll have data showing us whether the lake levels are high due to heavy rain or low following a long dry spell.

Our study will include collecting water samples monthly and during “high flow” conditions to gauge whether water nutrient concentrations shift. This flow data is crucial in developing mathematical models of Torch Lake. This mathematical model will help us quantify the amount of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) flowing into the lake as conditions change - rainfall, run off, groundwater flowrates, and the concentrations of nutrients within them all change. The model also allows for us to simulate how much of an improvement we might get if we can impact some of these effects via better septic fields or reduced use of fertilizers, for example.

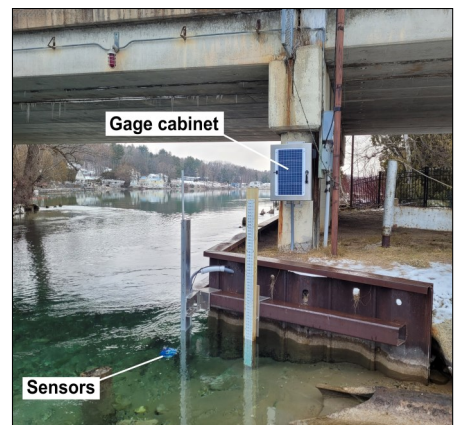


Gage at Clam River to capture water samples and conditions as part of our water quality study of Torch Lake

You may see our United States Geological Survey (USGS) team members with whom we’re working on the study out on Torch Lake or rivers taking water samples. At the time this newsletter publishes,

we will have collected samples on at least three different occasions.

We’ve also contracted with Great Lakes Environmental Center (GLEC) of Traverse City to conduct our chemical analysis. GLEC has a long history of working with Torch Lake samples and have met our requested criteria of quality control and detection threshold. We have also contracted with Dr. Ann St. Amand of PhycoTech to conduct our analyses of the zooplankton and phytoplankton samples. (You may recall Dr. Ann St. Amand was involved on our near shore study in 2020).



Gage at Torch River

We look forward to keeping you updated on developments throughout the study.

DNR Plans to Increase Size of Torch River Boat Launch

The DNR has published their plans for the “Torch River Bridge Access Site,” which essentially involves expanding the current boat launch site to increase access to Torch Lake and the rest of the Elk River Chain of Lakes.

The project is big and costly and, before the lines on their plans turn into an excavation, we recommend the DNR strongly consider some changes:

1. Michigan Boating Law aimed at preventing the introduction of invasive aquatic plants and animals into lakes went into effect March 21, 2019. This was ignored and these plans do not include a boat wash. Torch Lake and the entire watershed are currently battling multiple invasive species including Zebra and Quagga Mussels, the Round Goby, and Eurasian Water Milfoil. The impact of invasive species to the watershed is extreme. The DNR **must** make the boat wash a priority on this project.
2. The plan removes 2 dozen trees and retains only a few – maximizing boat trailer parking at the expense of green space.
3. The restrooms were simply “copied” from a previous project as a “rustic location Vault” toilet, rather than running water with a septic/drain field treatment. Imagine what the system will look like the week of July 4.
4. The entire shoreline will be stripped with **no** buffer zone. This sends the wrong message to all riparian owners, landscape companies, and builders. It’s counter to everything the townships are aiming to protect.

There is adequate access currently to make this a beautiful site for many to enjoy for years to come. The plans need to be re-visited and revised. The review time did not allow input from locals and that’s not acceptable. For more information or to share input, join the online public hearing hosted by EGLE June 1.

Keeping an Eye on the Proposed Torch Lake Kayak Park

The TLPA Board of Directors has been and will continue to actively monitor the proposed Kayak Park on the west side of Torch in Milton Township. The park would include 400’ of lake frontage just south of Indian Point with access off West Torch Lake Drive. The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy is involved in the project. We’ve also attended the Parks and Recreation Committee and township meetings as well as relevant portions of the Antrim County Board of Commissioners meetings. We understand the developers are currently trying to arrange financing.

Of critical interest to us will be the specifics of the plans for the park and – most importantly – the waterfront once they become available. Please help by attending the Milton Township meetings and making your opinions known. More to come, so please stay tuned.

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Mission of TLPA

To preserve the beauty of Torch Lake and its watershed and to protect its environment for the enjoyment of all

Gentle Reminder to Renew your Membership for 2023

If you haven't renewed your membership, please do as soon as possible. This is a critical time for TLPA. We are beginning our testing of Torch Lake in conjunction with USGS and other scientists to find the answers to why our lake is changing. We need all Torch Lake supporters to help us.

TLPA is the one organization that has always led the fight to protect and preserve the lake. Being a TLPA member is one way you can help. Recruiting your neighbors and friends to become members is another way. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Bruce Hulteen at bmhulteen@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your support.

What's Up with the Milton Township Proposed RV Park Property?

Milton Township has approved the new and improved ordinance language specific to any future RV park considerations in the township. The Soil & Erosion permit and the Notice of Coverage with Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for stabilization work on the Torch River Road property (the site of the infamous RV park) has been extended to September 7, 2023. At this point, the perimeter of the property is deemed "stable" by the Soil & Erosion office, but additional site work is needed

Welcome New Members

James & Carolyn Benson

David & Heidi Rattigan

Kathleen & Mark Haglage

Elizabeth Charlton

Alyse Mengason

Memorials/Honorarium

In memory of Meredith Grider:

Elizabeth Bartholomew

Martin & Cathy Brown

Bob & Dorothy Clore

Elizabeth & Philip Poindexter

Amy Lettes

WEW Circle (c/o Angie Mccorkle)

Kathy Oliver

Emily Quinn

Jill Jelsma

Todd Hill

Mary Ringwalt

Cheryl Frouia

Mary Radle

Martha Koro

Kathryn Petroskey

Sally Price

Peachy (Mary) Kohler

Cathy Roux

Joseph Helm

Stuart Strickler

Susan Wood

Becky Fellerhoff

Ellen Rudd

In Memory of Martha Smith:

Beth Mountjoy & Steve Maguire

In Memory of Liz Saylor:

Beth Mountjoy & Steve Maguire

In Memory of Richard Gresla:

Barbara Carton

In Memory of Liz Kobe:

Nancy Podurgiel

In Memory of Dottie Gerrity:

Nancy (Martin) Podurgiel

In Honor of Maggie Farrington's 9th Birthday:

Sarah Vogel

Domenica Kraus

Christine Paglierani

Mona Shahbazi

The Power of Native Plants: Q&A with Jeanine Rubert, Owner of Pine Hill Nursery

Q: If you had to pick three native plants to put in your garden, which ones would you choose?

A: It's hard to choose just three native plants, but here are some of my favorites:

1) **Native Oak Trees** support a large variety of caterpillars that are so vital to the food web.

2) **Smooth Hydrangeas** are one of my favorite native shrubs because they bloom a long time and attract pollinators.

3) **Echinacea Purpurea** – or purple coneflower – attracts butterflies when in bloom and the birds love the seeds in the fall.

Q: What are the benefits of native plants?

A: Native plants have many benefits. They are better adapted to our local climate and growing conditions. Native plants have evolved over hundreds of thousands of years and are much better at supporting our local ecosystems. Wildlife evolved alongside the native plants in our region and use those natives as food, shelter, and a place to raise their young. Native plants typically require less fertilizer and water and help conserve our natural resources.

Q: When should you plant natives?

A: Most trees and shrubs prefer to be planted in the spring or fall, but as long as you care for them, you can plant trees, shrubs, and perennials anytime.

Q: Can you recommend drought tolerant plants? What about those that prefer moist soil?

A: Rudbeckia Fulgida (Black-eyed Susan), Coreopsis, Solidago, and Asclepias Tuberosa are a few of my favorite drought-tolerant varieties. My favorite varieties that prefer moist soil include River Birch, Swamp White Oak, Cardinal Flower, and Joe Pye Weed.



Cardinal Flower

Q: Anything else you'd like us to keep in mind?

A: There are simple things each of us can do to garden more sustainably, including: 1) limit lawn size; 2) use native plants; 3) protect natural habitats; 4) do not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides; 5) irrigate efficiently; 6) use mulch; and 7) prune conservatively.



Echinacea Purpurea



Black-eyed Susan

Q: What natural fertilizers are available at Pine Hill?

A: Pine Hill carries several organic fertilizers including Healthy Gardena and Safe Green Lawn by Morgan Composting, Dr. Earth, and Neptune's Harvest.

Q: If there's one plant everyone should have on their property, what would it be?

A: Native Oak

Check Township Ordinances Before Landscaping Your Shoreline

Spring in Northern Michigan! It's time to clean out the garden shed, find the trowels and rakes, and think about some flowers and plants to add to or change your landscaping. Good thoughts, but wait! Did you know there are permits and local ordinances that pertain to the shoreline? I'm sure you're aware of "building" ordinances, but *some* townships have specific rules pertaining to shorelines, too. And there isn't just one set of rules for Torch Lake, but different ones for each township. Torch Lake has five townships in Antrim County and one in Kalkaska County. Therefore, a "building" contractor needs to check with each township and apply for the correct permits. *And*, if you are planning to make changes near the water, that means you or your landscaper needs to know your township's zoning ordinances.

Wait, what's this about zoning ordinances and shorelines? A few things to consider:

- You may need a buffer zone of 25 or 50 feet from the water.
- An ordinance might involve permits for structures or rocks.
- There might be restrictions on docks or platforms, even cutting down trees.

What you should do:

- Know what township you live in.
- Check with your zoning administrator for ordinances that involve the lakeshore.
- Ensure the landscaper or nursery you're working with knows to check with the township before starting a project. You could be cited for not following ordinances.

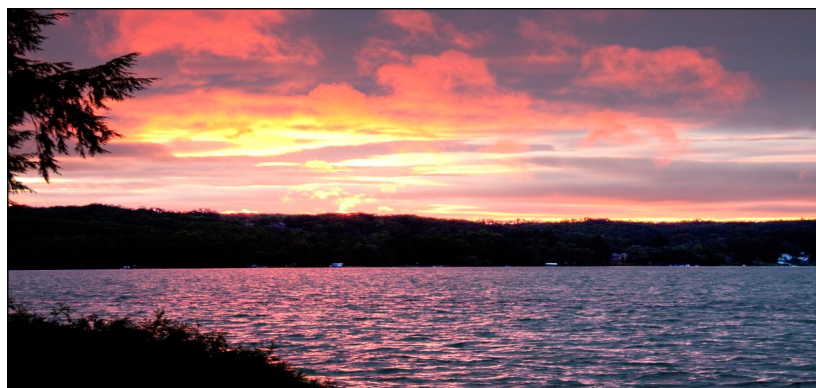
Most of the ordinances are to protect the lake, keep it clean and free of fertilizer. This means having a buffer zone and using shrubs to prevent runoff. Consider native plants, which require less maintenance and are most likely to thrive in our area/zone (see the Q&A with Jeanine Rubert, owner of Pine Hill Nursery, in this newsletter). And, an interesting fact, leave grass longer closer to the water to prevent geese from gathering on your mowed lawn. Small shrubs, plants, and trees can also help.

And, if you're thinking about changing your shoreline, get a permit to ensure you're not impacting your neighbors and or causing erosion that could harm the lake.

There are so many choices when it comes to being a good lake steward. Ask area nurseries for ideas on native plants. "Shoreline Living" is a booklet that shows beautiful pictures of lakeside plant options and is available at Torch Conservation Center. You can also get ideas from the Antrim Conservation District at www.antrimcd.com and click on Healthy Lakes Landscaping.

Torch Lake thanks you.

Sunset on Torch Lake



Annual GEM Event June 10

You and a guest are invited to join us at Torch Lake Township Hall from 9:00 a.m. to noon. GEM offers an opportunity to talk with TLPA board members and learn valuable information and insights about the work we're doing to protect Torch Lake.



Northern Shoveler, photo by Steve Jessmore/Audubon Photography Awards 2022

This year's featured speaker is award-winning photographer Steve Jessmore, who took first place in the Professional Division of the 2021 and 2022 Audubon Photography Awards. His photos are featured on the cover of Audubon Magazine's Awards Issue and can be seen here: www.audubon.org/magazine/summer-2022.

Most of Steve's work comes from the Torch Lake/Torch River area, and he will share the stories of local birds through photojournalism.

We'll also share an update on the progress of the USGS project and insights on how the lake is changing.

Please let us know you plan to attend by visiting: tlpa.co/event/tlpa-annual-gem-event/. We hope to see you there. Coffee, juice, and pastries will be served and there's no cost to attend.

Upcoming TLPA Events

June 10—GEM

August 1—TLPA Annual Meeting



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Alden State Bank
Barker Creek Nursery & Landscaping
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The Chief Golf Course/BluePelican
Creative Characters Printing
Don Fedrigo Re/Max of Elk Rapids
Draper Construction, Inc.
Echo Quality Grinding
Elk Rapids Marina
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