



SPRING 2024

USGS/Keep Torch Lake Blue Update

The USGS/TLPA Project Team is pleased with the state of the project as we wrap up the first quarter of 2024. We've completed our first year of water quality testing, and the mild winter allowed us to collect and analyze samples every month to date. Our gage stations at Clam River and Torch River worked continuously all year giving us the valuable data on water flow rates. We will expand our tributary studies in 2024 as we add a gage station in Spencer Creek and collect samples for analysis in Eastport, Wilkinson and A- Ga-Ming Creeks and possibly Bonnie Brook. We also will start our ground-water testing and atmospheric deposition measuring this spring.

Our sampling completed in 2023 generated data from hundreds of water and biological samples. The emphasis and work to date has been to study the results of the laboratory analysis. This first year of our project will enable us to establish a comprehensive baseline of Torch Lake. The baseline will be used to compare historical data looking for possible changes as well as the necessary platform for work in the future.

The next milestone event for the project will be on May 3, 2024. We will hold our annual "Adaptive Management" meeting at the Torch Lake Township Hall. This year's event will focus mainly on an in depth review of the data collected in 2023, and solicit input from the many water quality experts in attendance. We have an excellent line-up of speakers for the event:



Spencer Creek gage

Dr. Dale Robinson – USGS Research Hydrologist – USGS Team Leader

Dr. Sherry Martin – USGS Groundwater expert

Dr. Jan Stevenson – MSU Professor (retired) – Benthic Algae expert (sponsored by TLA)

Trish Narwold – TCC co-founder and project team member to report on plankton studies

Dr. Geoffery Schladow - emeritus professor, University of California-Davis, and Director of the Tahoe Research Station

Dr. Jerry Sweeten - Professor of Biology and Director of Environmental Studies at Manchester College (retired) and co-founder of Ecosystems Connections Institute, LLC

Dr. Mark Rowe - Research Physical Scientist, NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory

The event will be live streamed and available after the meeting on You Tube. The link is:

<https://youtube.com/live/1fN7MSBG4MY?feature=share>

2024 New Member Campaign

I'm A Torch Lake Protection Alliance Member Because I Love Torch Lake- Are You? The intent of the sign is to challenge your neighbors who are not TLPA members to join.

With all of the issues on Torch Lake, we need every property owner to join us in our fight to protect and preserve our lake for future generations. Golden Brown Algae, invasive species, township disregard for riparian rights, expansion of marinas, and congestion on the south end of the lake are just a few of the issues we are involved in.

We are asking for your help. If you are willing to display a sign on your property, contact Bruce Hulteen at Bmhulteen@gmail.com or 616-560-3952. We will deliver the signs to you.



Torch Lake: A Biological Phenomenon

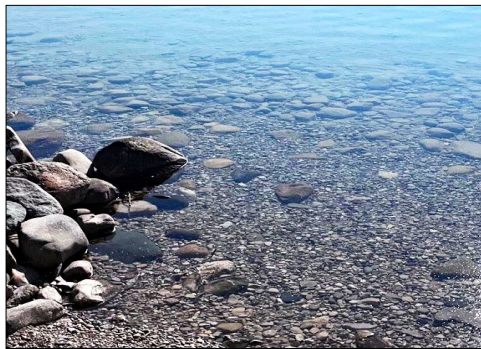
This is a story about a long time riparian of Torch Lake and the changes he has witnessed over 60 years. Wayne Lancaster and his family first saw Torch Lake in 1959. The family rented a cottage in 1960 and his father bought the piece of property they now live on in 1961. You could buy lake front property in 1960 for \$50 a foot. Wayne said when he first saw the lake, he was amazed by the colors, and clarity of the water. One of the things he remembers the most about Torch Lake was being able to see the patterns on the Petosky stones on the bottom of the lake. He remembers the hard sandy bottom, the abundance of perch and the big sucker runs in the Spring.



Torch Lake before GBA

Wayne, like many long-time property owners, is concerned about the changes he has witnessed over the years. In fact, Wayne says he is disgusted by the transformation he is seeing to the lake he loves: the drop in fish population, slime and scum on the rocks and docks, and the change in the bottom of the lake.

Wayne feels that people need to take responsibility for protecting and preserving the lake. Lake owners need to stop fertilizing their lawns, they need to have their septic systems pumped and inspected on a regular basis and they need to stop clear cutting their lots. We need to appreciate what we have and take steps to preserve Torch Lake for future generations.



Torch Lake 1989



Torch Lake 2023

Some steps he would recommend are for riparians to establish natural plant buffers near the water, become TLPA members and support the mission, and for townships to establish and enforce ordinances

that limit what can be done on lake property. We all need to appreciate what a biological phenomenon Torch Lake is and do everything we can to preserve it for future generations. Wayne's biggest fear is seeing the changes over the past 30 years and wondering what the lake will look like 30 years from now.

Wayne is committed to protecting Torch Lake. He is a dedicated member of Torch Lake Protection Alliance (TLPA). He is assisting with the Keep Torch Lake Blue Project. He is financing the billboard (see page 5) that will encourage others to join TLPA (located between Torch Lake Township Hall and M-88 on US-31). The ad will run from May 13 to July 7 this year. He feels there is strength in numbers and if we can somehow get everyone committed to preserving our lake we can save it for future generations.

We are very fortunate to have Wayne and his family as part of the TLPA.

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Mission of TLPA

To preserve and protect the health and beauty of Torch Lake, its watershed and surrounding environ-

DNR/TLPA Meeting

Representatives from the Michigan DNR met with the TLPA Board on March 13, 2024. The meeting was extremely productive and was aimed at enhancing the dialogue between TLPA and the DNR as the expansion and development of the Torch Lake access site (adjacent to the Torch River) proceeds. We are most appreciative of the participation of two DNR officials overseeing the project (Kasey Cline, Cadillac District Supervisor and Stephanie Rosinski, Local Supervisor). The dialogue was wide-ranging and substantive, centering on twenty questions/points of information raised by the TLPA Board.

Some highlights of the information exchange include:

- The DNR manages its lands up to Torch Lake proper; EGLE manages issues within the water resource itself.
- There are currently no plans for expansion or addition of other DNR access points on Torch Lake.
- The DNR will not fertilize at the site, will have “no mow” zones and native plantings, and will replace any trees which require displacement.
- Within the water, invasive mussels are an existing problem, exacerbated by being carried in by birds, uncleaned watercraft, and recreational users carrying them on their clothing. DNR will not install and maintain a boat washing station, per general practice. However, partners to do so are sought – rough estimate of annual costs: \$50,000.
- Commercial users may use the site for launches only if they have a state permit.
- On-site set up and take- down by commercial users is not permitted.
- Currently, there are eleven permittees; no new ones have been issued in the past two years.
- The engineering contract for site planning and development is with Beckett & Raeder Inc.
- An updated master plan is yet to be issued: it will reflect Milton Township Buffer Zone requirements.
- The kayak launch will stay near the bridge; the boat launch area will be moved away from this site.
- Engineering has been coordinating with the county to enhance traffic flow to the site. Some parking will be available on-site; management of off-site parking is under county jurisdiction.
- Swimming/non-swimming rules and regulations will not be posted, because the DNR cannot enforce.
- The DNR will be hiring two additional rangers to manage during holiday weekends and other peak season times.
- A vault toilet will be installed, with capacity of about 1250 gallons and will be pumped as needed.
- Target for closing entire site to begin construction – July 5, 2024. DNR is planning on bi-weekly stakeholder updates once construction begins.

In general, the interaction ended with mutual commitment by the DNR and the TLPA to maximize information flow and dialogue among the DNR, TLPA, and the general public about the launching, construction and management of the Torch Lake access site so that the balanced mission of public use and environmental protection can be achieved.

TLPA Billboard Supports New Member Campaign

Torch Lake Protection Alliance will be running an ad on a billboard this summer. The billboard is on US-31, two miles south of M-88, and will run from May 13 to July 7. The billboard asks people to join the TLPA and help us in our efforts to **KEEP TORCH LAKE BLUE**. The billboard is a generous gift from Wayne Lancaster, an avid supporter of Torch Lake. The design is a beautiful picture of Torch Lake and should attract much attention.

The creation of the billboard is the work of many people. The photo was donated by Steven Huyser-Honig. The design is the work of Tristan McCracken (board member Tom Joseph's granddaughter) and Jessica Frances Gregoire Lancaster (Wayne Lancaster's daughter). Tristan and Jessica worked for hours creating many mock ups before we settled on the draft shown here. The billboard is just one part of our strategy to promote the importance of becoming a Torch Lake Protection Alliance member.



Dates to Put on Your Calendar

GEM - June 8

TLPA Annual Meeting - Thursday, August 1

This year's GEM meeting is scheduled for June 8th at the Torch Lake Township Hall. Our state representative John Roth will be our guest speaker. This will be an excellent opportunity for TLPA members to express our concerns and priorities for Torch Lake. We will also have a brief update on the status of our USGS study. Mark the date on your calendars and think about what our representative needs to hear. We will send an email invite in early May.

Hazardous Waste Drop-off Dates

June 29, 2024 at Elk Rapids DPW Station
117 Lake St., Elk Rapids, MI 49629

July 20, 2024 at Bellaire High School Parking Lot
204 W Forest Home Ave, Bellaire, MI 49615

August 31, 2024 at Antrim County Road Commission
319 East Lincoln St., Mancelona, MI 49659

All events begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. and end at noon sharp. To learn more about what kinds of materials can be dropped off, visit our HHW webpage.

Welcome New Members

Carole & Chuck Selander

Grant Yukins

Gwen McMullen

Judy Potter

Randal & Jodi Balconi

Steve Jessmore, Photography

Memorials

Harry Cook by Susan Chevalier

Holly LaPratt by Mary Roth

Bellaire Waste Treatment Plant

TLPA is aware that the Bellaire wastewater treatment plant has been under a consent order from EGLE since August 2023 for violating its operating (NPDES) permit. The violations include exceeding its permitted levels of phosphorous and its disposal of solids that are a product of the treating process. Treated water from the plant eventually makes its way to Torch Lake via Clam Lake. The NPDES permit is up for renewal in the fall of 2024. Stay tuned for future updates.

Support Our Business Members

A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort
Alden Lumber and Hardware
Alden State Bank
Barker Creek Nursery & Landscaping
Bay North Realty
Birch Street Dental
Chemical Control Co.
The Chief Golf Course/BluePelican
Creative Characters Printing
Don Fedrigo Re/Max of Elk Rapids
Echo Quality Grinding
Elk Rapids Marina
Elk Rapids Electric
Fitzpatrick Insurance Agency
Great Lakes Cottage Watch
Hell Fire Detroit Hot Sauce
Kidd & Leavy Real Estate

Lake Living Services, Inc.
Mapleridge Construction
Nicolas Realtor-Coldwell Banker Schmidt Realtors
North Country Power Generation
Northshore Dock
Parshall Tree & Turf Care
Pine Hill Nursery
Serve Electric
Short's Brewing Company
Steve Jessmore Photography
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