



# TLPA NEWS

Torch Lake Protection Alliance  
Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2026

## TLPA Board of Directors

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Bruce Hulteen, Secretary  
Mark Jasonowicz, Treasurer  
Rick Knopf  
Wayne Lancaster  
Tom Muldowney  
Tom Joseph  
Randy Asmus  
Sharon Hill  
Laura F. Atkinson  
Steve Kelley  
Lew Loss

## Advisory Board Members

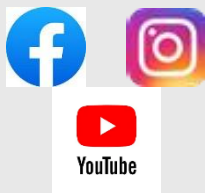
Norm Neuenschwander  
Lee Scott

## TLPA Mission

*To preserve and protect the health and beauty of Torch Lake, its watershed and surrounding environment for generations to come.*

## Connect with us!

<https://tlpa.co/>



## Message from our President *The Importance of Township Ordinances*

The TLPA Board strongly supports township ordinances that protect the lake. Moreover, ordinances need to be enforced. Torch Lake has six townships on its shores. A survey of their septic system, greenbelt and dock/watercraft ordinances shows they are all different. In fact, some of the townships don't have any ordinances regulating these protective measures.

For the first time in anyone's memory, we brought the township officials together at our GEM meeting in May of last year. The purpose was to start a conversation and create a network among the townships to share best practices. The meeting begged the question...if all the townships share the same lake, why can't they all have the same, best in class, protective ordinances?

The other important question is how long can we afford to wait for this convergence to occur? Torch Lake is not the lake it was 20 years ago. Developments along the shoreline and in the watershed have skyrocketed. There are invasives in the water such as Eurasian Milfoil, zebra and now quagga mussels. Everyone has seen the growth of benthic algae rimming the entire perimeter of the lake. Trees along the banks, which are critical to the preservation of the lake, have been lost to emerald ash boar, oak wilt and hemlock woolly adelgid. They've also simply been clear cut.

This summer TLPA will present its "state of the lake" findings from the Keep Torch Lake Blue project. It is the most comprehensive study of Torch ever undertaken, lasting three years at a cost of about \$1 million and involving the best expertise in the country. It is certain to highlight that trends in water quality and loadings of nutrients to the lake, both leading indicators of unwanted changes, need to be arrested. Better and uniform ordinances are sure to be a key recommendation.

Over the last few years there has also been a disturbing trend toward commercial marinas on Torch Lake. Permit applications are up. It has been discovered that some operations have been taking place without permits. We've noted that EGLE is permitting marinas to a size that is larger than what prudent ordinances, where they exist within townships, would allow.

Some townships have rushed to fill this gap by re-enacting ordinances that were removed. We applaud those efforts. But all the townships need to get there quickly. Ordinances will limit what EGLE otherwise would permit. They are the backstops that protect the shorelines of Torch Lake, allow neighbors to enjoy their own lakefront and prevent funneling. Absent ordinances it's a race to commercialize and overrun the lake to the detriment of all.

# Keep Torch Lake Blue Campaign Ends 2025 Exceeding its Goal

We asked and you responded. The members of TLPA understand the vital importance of the data that we are continuing to gather in and around Torch Lake through the research being conducted by the USGS and TLPA. This world class research takes funding, and we have raised enough money to exceed our goal!

Our 2025 goal was to raise \$100,000 and we have gone beyond it. Donations are still coming in, but we are now able to fully fund the full USGS/Keep Torch Lake Blue project report and mathematical models being developed and written by the USGS. We have been very smart in our maintenance of the funds. As a result, we have money in the KTLB fund that allows us to continue the research on Torch in 2026. We couldn't be more excited that our TLPA members care so deeply about Torch Lake that we can continue to gather significant data in 2026.

Thank you to all the TLPA members who have supported this historic fundraising work that offers a comprehensive look at our beloved Torch Lake. We sincerely appreciate your support.

## TLPA Membership Renewal 2026

This is a friendly reminder from the Torch Lake Protection Alliance. It is time to renew your 2026 membership. If you have already renewed, we thank you. You should have received by mail and email in November, a notice to renew your membership.

Our membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. It is so important that we stay united in our efforts to protect and preserve Torch Lake. We encourage you to use our auto renew option. It makes it easy for you and TLPA.

You can renew online at [Tlpa.co](http://Tlpa.co), or mail a \$125 check to TLPA, PO Box 706, Bellaire MI, 49615. If you have any questions, please contact Bruce Hulteen at [bmhulteen@gmail.com](mailto:bmhulteen@gmail.com) or 616-560-3952. We appreciate and need your continued support.

## Introducing Lee Scott

### New Advisory Board Member



Lee is a 60-year veteran of the soft drink industry and has owned property on Torch Lake for more than 30 years. He values the quality-of-life benefits TLPA

provides to lakefront owners.

Lee previously served nine years on the TLPA board and now contributes as an advisory board member, grateful for the organization's work protecting Torch Lake

## Memorials and Honorariums

*Susan and Jeffrey Barber in memory of Mark McMahan (KTLB Fund)*  
*Kevin Watrous in memory of Todd Collins (KTLB Fund)*  
*Glimmer Images in memory of Todd Collins (KTLB Fund)*  
*Arthur and Catherine Brerton in memory of Todd Collins (KTLB Fund)*  
*Nancy Podurgiel and Douglas Walker in memory of Terry Malone (KTLB Fund)*  
*Sallie and Steve Foley in honor of Dave Martin (KTLB Fund)*  
*Catherine Douglas-Penn in honor of Noki and Flach Douglas (KTLB Fund)*  
*Tom Muldowney in memory of Lou Thierry (KTLB Fund)*

## Welcome New Members

*Kenneth & Janice Kubitschek*  
*Patrick & Gretchen Greenwood*  
*Daniel & Julie Graham*  
*Ann Lynch*  
*Claire Scheibner*  
*Elizabeth Ross*  
*Jocelyn VoVillia*  
*Mark Avenmarg*

## Socialize with TLPA!

There are more ways than ever to connect with TLPA, our activities, events and our mission! You can find us on the web: on Facebook, Instagram and on YouTube! We invite you to engage with other members, board members and our business members.



@torchlakeprotectionalliance



@tlpa1



YouTube

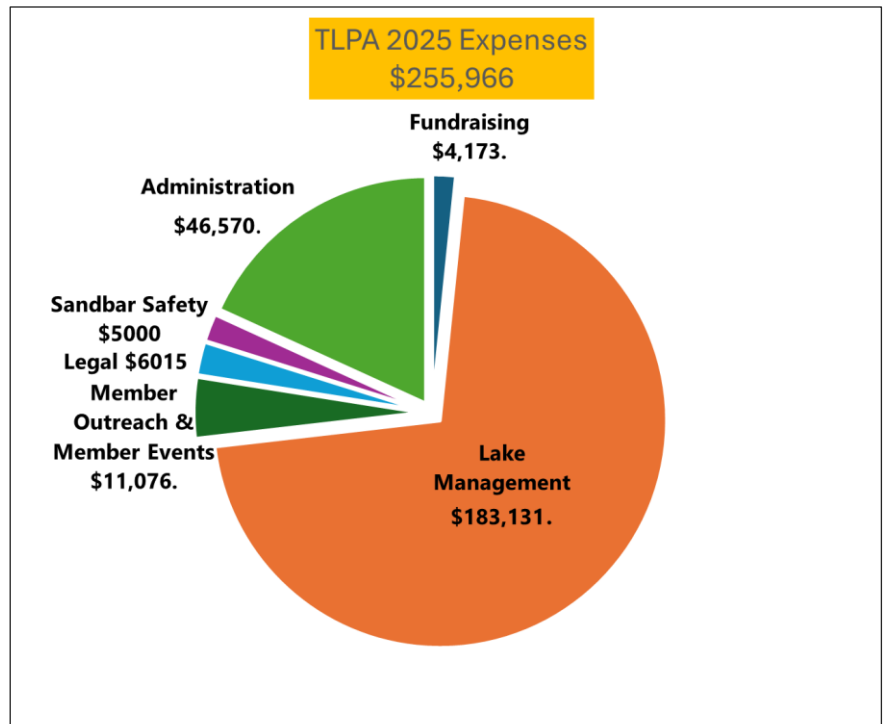
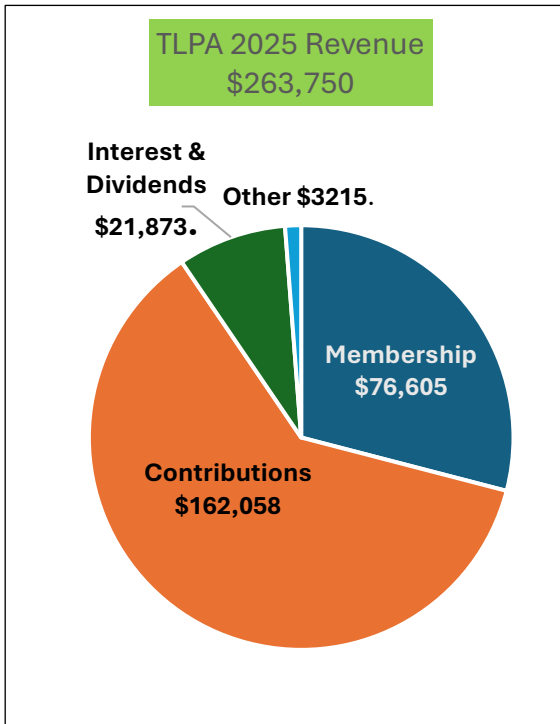
@torchlakeprotectionalliance



<https://tlpa.co/>

# TLPA Revenue and Expense Overview 2025

TLPA revenue for 2025 includes contributions which are accounted for based on the specific purpose of the donation. Funds contributed for Keep Torch Lake Blue (KTLB), Legal Defense, and Sandbar Safety are restricted and can only be expended for that fund's purpose. Other revenue such as memberships, interest, dividends and any other miscellaneous funds are for general operating purposes and expended based on board approval. TLPA expenses for 2025 identify the amounts spent for restricted purposes KTLB (Lake Management Expense account), Legal, and Sandbar Safety. All other expenses are from general operating revenues.



Please note that our administration costs were higher than normal in 2025 due to onetime outside contractor costs of \$15,000 and other charges for updating the website. The investment was made to increase TLPA's exposure around the lake.

## Save the Great Lakes Fish Act Seeks \$500 Million to Combat Invasive Mussels

HR 6053 was introduced by Rep Dingell (HR 6) in November of last year. Rep Jack Bergman (HR 1) has cosponsored this bipartisan legislation. The act seeks to authorize \$500 million over 10 years for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to lead a coordinated "plan of attack" against both Quagga and Zebra mussels, which are threatening Lake Michigan and inland lakes. Both mussels are efficient filter feeders that effectively remove the base of the food chain, which causes a collapse in populations of native fish (whitefish are down 80% in Lake MI). This disruption of the native ecosystem also can cause harmful algal blooms and increases in benthic algae in our favorite swimming spots.

Unfortunately, the invasion did not skip our beautiful Torch Lake. Torch Lake Protection Alliance as part of the Keep Torch Lake Blue project surveyed the lake in 2025 and estimates the population of quagga to be 40 billion quagga (and growing). Obviously, a problem of this magnitude will require sufficient funding, which this Bill seeks to provide.

Please join us in supporting this legislation in any way you feel comfortable: by writing Rep Bergman in support, encouraging friends and neighbors to do so, and increasing public awareness.

## Support TLPA Business Members

365 Outdoor  
A-Ga-Ming  
Alden Lumber and Hardware  
Alden Mill House  
Alden State Bank  
Avery Excavating  
Barker Creek Nursery & Landscaping  
Birch Street Dental  
Blackmore Landscaping Services  
Bruce's Earthworks  
Bruce's Excavation  
Chemical Control Co.  
The Chief Golf Course/BluePelican  
Clearwater Carpentry & Custom Homes  
Creative Characters Printing  
DLH Builders  
Don Fedrigo Re/Max of Elk Rapids  
Drogt Excavating  
Elk Rapids Marina  
Elk Rapids Electric  
Ethanology Distillation  
Fitzpatrick Insurance Agency  
Great Lakes Cottage Watch  
Great Northern Benefits LLC  
Hell Fire Detroit Hot Sauce  
Jay Merchant Builders Inc  
Kidd & Levy Real Estate  
Landscape Logic  
Lake Living Services, Inc.  
Luhr's Landing  
Mapleridge Construction  
North Country Power Generation  
Northshore Dock  
Painting by Dan  
The Pear Tree  
Pine Hill Nursery  
Providence Farms  
Restoration Services of Michigan  
Serve Electric  
Service Lynk  
Steve Jessmore Photography  
SunLife Marine Torch River  
TBA Credit Union  
Top Notch Heating, Cooling, and Geothermal  
Village Market Food Centers

**TLPA welcomes all businesses to join! Visit <https://tlpa.co/> for information.**

### A-Ga-Ming

If you are looking for lodging, great food, or some of the best golf in the Midwest, A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort has it all. 72 golf holes located on Torch Lake and Lake Michigan. The four golf courses not only offer a challenge to every level golfer, but they present some of the best scenery in Northern Michigan. A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort takes great pride in their focus on the customer and offer some of the best golf values in Michigan. Visit their web site [www.a-ga-ming.com](http://www.a-ga-ming.com) for reservations. A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort has been a strong supporter of TLPA for many years.

### Village Market

Whether you are shopping for fine wines, the choicest meats, locally grown produce, or filling your car up with gas, Village Market is your one stop shopping location. Village Market is as unique as the communities they serve, each of their full-service markets offer the highest quality products at great prices, with service customers deserve. Village Market has been a strong supporter of TLPA for many years. The Village Market also supports many community activities through donations from their receipts.

Please Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming  
Events

GEM (Greet, Educate & Meet) event – June 13, 2026  
10am-12pm at Torch Lake Township Hall

Annual Meeting – July 28, 2026 4pm – 8pm at A-Ga-  
Ming Golf Course

## Township News

**Clearwater Township** – The township continues to work on short term rentals and will explore a dock/hoist/boat ordinance.

**Helena Township** – The township is looking at language that would regulate the use of trailers, RV's and campers on the lake. The bi-monthly meeting to begin this discussion is Thursday, February 5 at 5:00 pm. For those unable to attend, questions or comments can be submitted in writing to [PlanningComm@HelenaTownship.com](mailto:PlanningComm@HelenaTownship.com) or [Supervisor@HelenaTownship.com](mailto:Supervisor@HelenaTownship.com)

**Milton Township** – The township is looking at a possible condo project on the site that was proposed for the failed RV project. Also, there is a zoning amendment proposal for the Planning Committee on February 4 at 7:00 pm regarding high density development for Northshore Dock employees. More details can be viewed in minutes on the township website and comments can be emailed to [zoning@miltontownship.org](mailto:zoning@miltontownship.org)

**Torch Lake Township** – A meeting was held at the Torch Lake Township on January 29 to provide a community update of the Nakwema Non-motorized Trailway. The presentation was a thorough review of the status of the Trailway project extension from Elk Rapids to Charlevoix, with emphasis on Torch Lake Township. One of the key take aways was the selection of the East side of US131 for the pathway to be connected.