Wall Lake Signal

October 2015

A Publication of the Greater Wall Lake Association INC.

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Barry County Foundation
Wall Lake Preservation Fund

Members of the GWLA board of directors sign the agreement with the Barry County Foundation to create the Wall Lake Preservation Fund.

Front: Jerry Sivak-Treas, Alan Fried-Pres, Bonnie Geddys-BCF, Mary Branch-Sec, Susan Trudeau-VP
Back: Richard Fluke, Tim Harsevoort, Christy Tigchelaar, Marcia Tiffany, Doug Drenth, Bill Cook, Walter Reilly, James Lockwood

At the end of 2014 many Wall Lake area residents approached Greater Wall Lake Association (GWLA) board members and expressed gratitude to the GWLA for all we do to protect Wall Lake. These people asked if there were a way to financially support the GWLA beyond the annual dues and donations made to the GWLA. Some of these people asked if there were a way to donate money to our lake association that is specifically targeted for legal fees and costs associated with the preservation of Wall Lake. In addition, some of these people were looking for a way to leave money to the GWLA in their wills as part of estate planning.

The mission of the GWLA is to protect Wall Lake and the related interests of our riparians. Some of the activities we are involved with include water quality testing, preserving our diverse habitat, preserving our wetlands, preserving our vibrant fishery, preventing the transmission of invasive species into Wall Lake, serving as a community leader when our lake is faced with threats, placing rock hazard buoys, organizing a Fourth of July boat parade, organizing various social events, and organizing garage sales. We take our responsibilities very seriously and we are deeply committed to the preservation of Wall Lake.

In the spring of 2015 the GWLA agreed to establish a Wall Lake Preservation Fund. The question was: How do we set up something like this? Lake association boards are loosely knit groups of volunteers, and managing a fund like this is time consuming and requires financial expertise. Yes, there is wonderful hardworking chemistry on this board, but creating and managing a fund like this is more than we can do. So we decided to begin discussions with an organization right here in Barry County that provides such vehicles for community development philanthropy - The Barry Community Foundation.

The GWLA board has established the GWLA Preservation Fund through the Barry Community Foundation. The Community Foundation movement is a growing community development strategy, and Michigan has many such foundations and is considered a national leader with this. Through a community foundation, communities can endow funds to support various local initiatives, such as our Wall Lake Preservation Fund. This also provides a way for people to support their own communities through charitable giving.

Bonnie Gettys has been Executive Director of the Barry Community Foundation since it was established in 1995. Under Bonnie's leadership, the Barry Community Foundation has grown to include over 225 funds and over 30 million dollars in assets. She has worked closely with the GWLA board in establishing the GWLA Preservation Fund.

As of September 1, 2015, we are proud to say that we have established the GWLA Preservation Fund. Through our professional affiliation with the Barry Community Foundation, we have created a formal mechanism for donors to gift money, land, or other assets while living or through estate bequests, in a manner that targets Wall Lake preservation, while maximizing your tax deductions! A philanthropic opportunity has been established that will help preserve this wonderful lake for future generations. Proceeds from the fund will be used for expenses associated with preserving Wall Lake, such as legal costs and land acquisition and preservation.

It is possible to gift money online via the Barry Community Foundation's website at www.barrycf.org, or simply write a check to Barry Community Foundation, with *GWLA Preservation Fund* in the check's memo line. You should call Bonnie at 269-945-0526 if you have special gifting questions or arrangements you would like to discuss.

On behalf of the Greater Wall Lake Association, thank you for your past and future support of our efforts to preserve Wall Lake. We could not do what we do without you. - Jim Lockwood

A Message from the GWLA President by Alan Freid

I hope everyone is enjoying this relatively mild fall we've been having, though the snow is heading our way! We are currently in the process of renewing our ongoing relationship with PLM (Professional Lake Management) for the control of invasive weed species and we expect that to completed shortly. According to both their tests and independent tests that we've had conducted the water quality of our lake remains very high. We also have a number of pending issues that we are dealing with as a board which will hopefully lead to some exciting announcements in the Spring. Finally we are giving serious consideration to changing the time and location of our annual meeting to encourage greater turn out among our members so if you have any suggestions on what you might be interested in please pass them on to a board member, but at the very least look for an announcement next spring on that as well. Have a great winter everyone.

A Message from the GWLA Vice President by Susan Trudeau

Congratulations to all of the GWLA board members for the many successes reached during 2015. Wall Lake is in great health due to the many meetings, seminars and monitoring activities carried on by the board. We now have a Wall Lake Preservation Fund that will be sustained through the Barry County Foundation. This action is a great achievement and provides a benefit for those wishing to set up a legacy donation of land or monetary gift which will protect the lake for future genterations. And as of October 29th, there are over 500 new fingerling Walleye taking up residence in the lake. The GWLA board has been encouraging lake riparians to provide natural habitat along their shorelines, and be aware of the importance of cleaning boats and trailers in an effort to prevent further aquatic invasive species introduction. The increased use of kayaks and standup paddleboards, and one electric boat, also helps the ecology of the lake as well as enhancing excellent recreational opportunities. We encourage all sailors to be ready for an active season in 2016 also. Now we will get the snow shovels ready so that we can be set for winter sports: skating, cross country skiing, and ice fishing! Thank you again to all who have participated in our activities throughout the year, and thanks to the GWLA board for strengthening our ability to enjoy Wall Lake well into the future.

The Great Walleye Release of October 29, 2015

2016 DUES

Thank you to all who became GWLA members in 2015.

Because of your membership, we are able to provide for the needs of Wall Lake and enhance the lake life that we all enjoy. Dues remain at $35.00 per year per household. The GWLA is a non-profit organization incorporated November 27, 1972. Charitable donations may be made to the Barry County Foundation FBO Wall Lake Preservation Fund. (see Page 1 of this newsletter for details)

Send your dues for 2016 of $35.00 to:

GWLA, PO Box 56, Delton, MI 49046

Please include your name, mailing address, lake address, phone number and email address.

GWLA Board Members

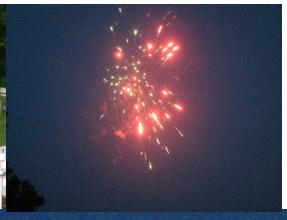
South Side

Jerry Sivak -Treasurer, Rob Seiter, Andy Bohr, Mary Branch-Sec.,
Alan Freid-Pres., Marcia Tiffany, and Christy Tigchelaar,

North Side

Tim Harsevoort, Doug Drenth, Bob Cove, Jim Lockwood, Dick Fluke,
Bill Cook, Walter Reilly, and Susan Trudeau –VP

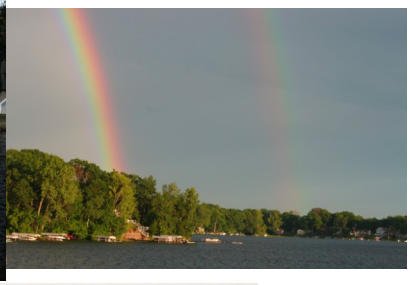
Email us at *greaterwalllakeassoc@gmail.com*

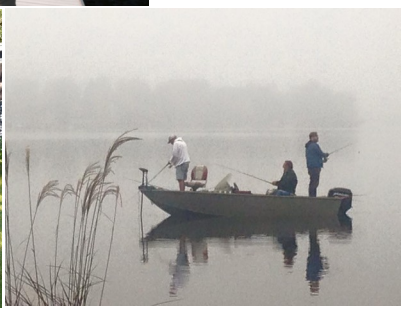


We went from the heavy Spring rains to the 4th of July boat parade to the dog days of summer with many great opportunities for family fun on Wall Lake.

The Annual Wall Lake Garage Sale in June was a success, as was the fishing! And 500 walleye fingerlings, 6 to 8 inches long, will be planted this October when the water is cool enough.

Nature provided us with some beautiful rainbows, sunsets and even a rare full moon eclipse (Blood Moon). Thank you to all who have shared their photos on the Greater Wall Lake Facebook site and by emailing them to us at **greaterwalllakeassoc@gmail.com.**





Now that Fall is upon us, we marvel at the change in colors before our world becomes monochrome again. The GWLA looks forward to 2016 and the ability to help our Wall Lake community continue to enjoy the benefits of a clean and enjoyable lake.

New committees are being formed. Become a part of the excitement and bring your ideas to our GWLA! We need people to help with the following groups: FIREWORKS, SOCIAL ACTIVITES, LAKESHORE NATURALIZATION and more. Email us at ***greaterwalllakeassoc@gmail.com.***

Q. What are walleye habits and characteristics?

A. Walleye are named for their large reflective eyes that allow them to see well at night and in deep, dark water. They typically live 5-6 ears in heavily fished waters and can live to 20 years otherwise. They can grow up to 30 inches long and weigh up to 20 pounds. They can survive water temperatures ranging from 32 to 90 degrees, but do best at 70. They prefer shallow, windy lakes with lots of rocky shoals. Walleye are believed to have evolved in North American rivers and later adapted to lakes. Walleye are native to Michigan.

Walleye spawn in spring soon after the ice melts and the water reaches 38-45 degrees. They do not make beds like bluegills, for example, and instead deposit their eggs in shallow, rocky, windy shoreline areas. They instinctively seek out these areas because the rocks hold their eggs in place while the wind makes waves which oxygenated their eggs and prevents silt from covering them. They typically spawn at the same locations year after year. After the eggs are fertilized they exhibit no parental responsibilities. The females spawn over one night, and the males spawn for a few nights with various females. Total spawning time can last up to a few weeks. Neither stay to guard the eggs. Even in the best of circumstances, egg survival is poor.

Young walleye eat zooplankton and insects until they are large enough to eat fish, initially minnows. When large enough, walleye eat many fish other species, including bass, trout, pike, perch, sunfishes, and other walleye.

Because walleye evolved in river systems, they reproduce best in lakes that have habitat that mimics rivers. Rocky shorelines and point bars best serve as inland lake spawning habitat. *Interestingly, research has shown that walleye have very poor spawning success in artificial offshore reefs, and efforts to create this sort of artificial walleye spawning habitat are not advised.* In fact, no study has been able to show walleye spawning in offshore reefs or in water over 5 feet deep. Walleye spawning habitat enhancement (placing gravel and cobble) should be limited to very shallow shoreline water.

Spawning habitat, water temperature, water oxygenation, water cleanliness, water level stability, and wind and wave energy are the main variables affecting egg survival.

Q. How long have walleye been in Wall Lake?

A. Perhaps going back the 1920's. My father tells me that his father caught walleye in Wall Lake in the 1930's. Also, I saw a photograph in a local antique store of a large walleye and the words "Wall Lake - 1929" were written on the photograph. Does anyone have reliable records of historical walleye introduction in Wall Lake?

Q. Is it safe to stock walleye in Wall Lake?

A. In all likelihood, yes. But there are risks with adding plant and animal life to a lake. For example, there is the risk of spreading Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), with either the planting of walleye, or the use of baitfish in Wall Lake.

VHS is known to affect over 90 marine and freshwater fish in the northern hemisphere. It affects fish of all sizes and age ranges, and is responsible for many fish kills. It does not pose any threat to human health. There is no known cure. Not all infected fish develop the disease, buy they can carry the virus and spread the disease to other fish. VHS had been blamed for fish kills in the Great Lakes and several inland in Wisconsin and Michigan. VHS was first described in Germany in the late 1930's. The virus targets the lining of the arteries and causes bleeding in the skin, muscles, and internal organs.

VHS first appeared in the Great Lakes in 2003, and by 2009 had spread into the five Great Lakes and several inland lakes. MSU and the USDA did testing in the Great Lakes region between 2005 and 2010. Both wild and hatchery fish were tested. 96,228 fish representing 73 species were examined for lesions suggestive of VHS. Of the 1,823 fish tested, 30 cases from 19 species tested positive for VHS. Overall findings were that this disease is complex and vigorous regulations are needed to prevent the spread of the disease.

In 2006 the Michigan DNR drastically reduced walleye stocking to reduce the spread of VHS found in hatchery fish. The DNR resumed heavy stocking in 2011.

I called Dan Laggis, of Laggis' Fish Farm (our source for walleye), and asked him what he knows about VHS, and this is what he said:

1. In Michigan, all fish raised or sold have to be "Health Certified." Because of VHS, for several years all Great Lakes fish farms have to get their fish tested. The VHS problem apparently is considered reasonably well managed because the federal government no longer requires VHS testing, but the State of Michigan still does require VHS testing.
2. Most of the fish he stocks are raised at his fish farm in Gobles, Michigan. The walleye he stocks are raised in Minnesota. He purchases them from a fish farm in Minnesota and then resells them. The walleye fish farm in Minnesota has to get their fish tested for VHS. They send their walleye to a lab for testing and the results are sent to Departments of Natural Resources in four nearby states, including Michigan. Testing takes one month. The fish cannot be sold and stocked unless testing is negative.

Q. What kind of lake is Wall Lake - a "bass and bluegill lake" or a "walleye lake"?
A. Primarily a bass and bluegill lake. This is because of the spanning habitat in our lake. Wall Lake has very little walleye spawning habitat.

Q. Is it a good idea to stock walleye in Wall Lake?
A. Yes, but the question is, to what extent.

1. Walleye interact with other fish species. They could potentially affect or be affected by other fish populations. Some of these interactions could be beneficial, and others detrimental. Walleye like to eat perch, for example, and it is possible that lakes with many walleye will have few perch. Also, walleye eat small bluegills, and it is possible that this will help reduce the many small bluegills that tend to overpopulate lakes with inadequate large predator fish. Also, both largemouth bass and smallmouth bass eat walleye, whereas walleye eat few bass. Research has shown that largemouth bass, in particular, prey heavily on walleye, and it may be an unrealistic management goal to simultaneously maximize walleye and largemouth bass populations. Largemouth bass predation limits survival of stocked walleye. The walleye we stock in Wall Lake are 6-8" long, and I would think this a challenging meal for all but our largest bass, and of course, northern pike. Bottom Line: Research has shown that it is ill-advised to stock walleye aggressively in lakes with even moderate largemouth bass populations.
2. Walleye interact with themselves. Stocking walleye in lakes with no natural reproduction obviously increases walleye abundance, but stocking walleye in lakes with natural reproduction does not increase long-term abundance beyond the capability of natural reproduction. And when stocking does temporarily increase abundance, it decreases walleye size. This is called population suppression and it is why walleye stocking is not recommended in consecutive years, but every other year instead. Research indicates that walleye should not be stocked in lakes where significant natural reproduction occurs. Botton Line: Wall Lake probably has very little natural walleye reproduction, and therefore a limited number of walleye can be stocked without reducing the size of the fish in our walleye population. High density stocking is not recommended. If we notice a decline in walleye population over the years we should focus our efforts on appropriate fishing regulations and habitat improvement.

Q. So what should we do?
A. We should stock limited numbers of the largest walleye we can buy every other year. 500 fingerlings 6-8' long seems a reasonable number, as this is at the low end of the recommended poundage per acre. Stocking any more than that is not wise in my opinion as I suspect we may only be feeding largemouth bass that should be eating the many small bluegills we already have. Also, Wall Lake simply lacks the spawning habitat to support a significantly naturally reproducing walleye population. In the end, we are essentially stocking walleye as a "put and take" fishery, and we need to do so wisely. Lastly, stocking walleye is a costly endeavor. Yet, walleye are a desirable fish to have in Wall Lake for the following reasons.

1. Increased biodiversity. Theoretically, the more species we have the better the balance will be among the species, and the more resilient the overall fish population will be to a variety of challenges.
2. Eat overpopulated small bluegills.
3. Popular sport fish.
4. Intrinsic aesthetic value. There is something special about the fact that many decades ago, walleye were somehow introduced in Wall Lake, and a limited naturally reproducing population may exist to this date. To the extent that periodic limited stocking can continue to safely support this member of our lake's ecosystem, I continue to advocate stocking of walleye in Wall Lake. -James Lockwood

Invasive Species and Wall Lake

What is an invasive species?
Invasive species are non-native species that have the potential to become established and the potential to spread widely and cause ecological or economic harm or pose a risk to human health.

Why should we be concerned about invasive species?
Invasive species threaten biodiversity because they compete with native species for food and habitat. Invasive species can also kill or displace native species, destroy habitat and alter food sources. In addition, they have economic effects on property values. Invasive species can also be a health risk to humans by introducing disease and toxins.

How bad is the invasive species problem?
It is very bad across the country, in Michigan, in Barry County, and in many nearby Hope Township lakes. Fortunately Wall Lake, because of limited boat trailer traffic, has had relatively few problems with invasive species – thus far.

How do invasive species get in Wall Lake?
Mainly by people launching and retrieving boats and jet-ski's.

What invasive species do we have in Wall Lake?
Currently we have three invasive plant species in Wall Lake.

1) Purple Loosestrife. This has been observed in out wetlands and along the shores of a few homeowners. The problem with this plant is that it can take over the wetlands and prevent them from functioning normally and filtering sediment and acidity from our incoming water. They can grow from 2-7 feet tall and root systems are as big as a bushel basket per plant! Remove purple flowers before they go to seed, and put them in a plastic bag in your garbage can. DO NOT COMPOST!

2) Eurasian Milfoil. This is moderately abundant in Wall Lake. It grows below the water surface. Professional Lake Management (PLM) treats this plant as needed. If you try to rake it or pull it out, beware! Each small piece will root and form a new plant.

There is a native species of Milfoil that has a smaller number of filaments radiating off of the main stem. Typically, Eurasian Milfoil has about 21 small filaments on each little branch. Each one of these little hairs is capable of creating an entirely new plant.

3. Curly-leaf Pondweed
This Pondweed has been observed a few times in Wall Lake. It grows below the water surface. PLM also treats this plant which seems to grow in small and specific areas. At this time it does not infect the entire lake as Eurasian Milfoil does.

CLEAN BOATS
CLEAN WATERS

What invasive species do other nearby lakes have?

Many nearby lakes have more damaging invasive plants than we have, as well as zebra mussels. Also, there are potentially devastating invasive plant "superweed" species that are being transported north towards Michigan from southern states. One of the worst is Hydrilla. This plant is highly resistant to herbicides, grows 6 inches per day, and in just a couple seasons can completely cover a lake in a mat several feet thick that will kill al plant and animal life in a lake. Hydrilla has been detected in lakes near the southern border of Michigan. Again, launching and retrieving boats and jet -ski's is the main way invasive species are transmitted into lakes. Hydrilla is a typical plant used in aquariums, so NEVER dump your aquarium water into or near a lake or stream!

Hydrilla: Note the five leaflets per whorl.

What can be done about invasive species in Wall Lake?

Prevention.

Protect and preserve our existing wetland native plant community.

Minimize launching and retrieving of boats and jet-ski's, and clean boats before and after entering the lake.

Monitoring. Plants in Wall Lake are surveyed by members of The Greater Wall Lake Association and a professional lake management weed control company.

Early Detection. This allows for a rapid response to treat a small area before it can spread.

Rapid Response. Treating small areas is less expensive and more effective.

Maintenance Control. Frequent monitoring and treating invasive species is time consuming and requires persistence and dedication. But it pays off by keeping invasive species at a minimum.

What can you do to help? Three things:

Support efforts to minimize launching and retrieving non-resident boats and jet-ski's in and out of Wall Lake. The GWLA is actively working on this.

When you do launch and retrieve your boats and personal watercraft on Wall Lake, please don't transport aquatic plants or zebra muscles into Wall Lake. This can be prevented by cleaning your boats and trailers before and after launch, and draining water from bilges and livewells at the launch site before leaving. Also, it is a good idea to dispose of unused bait in the trash rather than dumping it n the lake. In addition, do not transport fish to waterbodies other than where they were originally caught. Lastly, it is possible to disinfect livewells and bilges with a mixture of 5 gallons of water and ½ cup of bleach.

Be a part of a network that reports new occurrences and the spread of existing occurrences of invasive species. Feel free to contact anyone on the GWLA Board with questions.
Email to ***greaterwalllakeassoc@gmail.com***

In summary: Wall Lake is a treasure, with fabulous wetlands and few invasive species. The main threats to Wall Lake's existence are damage to the wetlands at the southwest portion of the lake, and the introduction of invasive species by the launching and retrieving of boats and jet-ski's.

- James Lockwood

Wall Lake Weed District News

During the Public Hearing at Hope Township Hall on October 6th, the new contract for invasive weed control and lake management with Professional Lake Management was explained. This contract will be in effect from 2016-2020, and costs will be assessed to property owners in the Wall Lake Weed District. The contract was approved by the Township Board.

A second Public Hearing will take place on **Tuesday, November 10th at 630 PM** at the Hope Township Hall. This meeting will pertain to how the assessments will be apportioned to those in the Weed District. A notice of hearing will be published in the Hastings Banner previous to this meeting. Also, contact the Hope Township staff if you have questions previous to the meeting by calling 269 948-2464.