

The Gravel Laker

Volume XX Number 2

www.gravellake.org

Fall/Winter, 2008



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President's Corner

Sewers are upon us!

With the coming of fall, we close another season at the lake but get closer to the construction of our sewer system. The Lakes Area Sewer Authority is hopeful that construction will begin in 2009. This group is working hard to meet aggressive timelines that keep our project moving forward. There's still not a final word on when and if there will be public hearings, but we will notify all Gravel Lakers when exact details are known.

Looking forward, we must keep in mind that our project is a major public works effort. Construction of this magnitude will cause at least some inconveniences. However, our engineers and contractors will work to minimize these effects. "You've got to break some eggs to make a cake" - that will be how we get to a well-maintained, septic free lake.

Questions or comments about our sewer project, and the Gravel Lake Association in general, can be directed to me at cucad4@hotmail.com.

Here's to yet another great summer at Gravel Lake.

Craig DeSimone
President - Gravel Lake Association

Sewer Update

The sewer project continues to roll along. Of interest is the recent inclusion of the Village of Marcellus to the project. Our sewer system will be taking on a percentage of Marcellus's sewage. Effectively, Marcellus will become a customer of our system and will share in the cost of construction.

Public hearings may occur this October. Additionally, as funding is necessary to start the project, the Lakes Area Sewer Authority is working to expedite the process and hopefully be able to start assessments this winter. The Gravel Lake Association will communicate any news as soon as it becomes available.

In other news, the authority voted to reappoint all of its officers (to be differentiated from its members). Wendy Elsey of Volinia Township announced her resignation from both the LASA as well as the Volinia Township Board (Finch Lake) for personal reasons. The Volinia Township Board will be responsible for appointing a new member to the LASA.

Any questions can be directed to Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com.



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Weed Treatment Update

Gravel Lake Management Program Update and Comparison

Gravel Lake, like thousands of lakes, ponds and reservoirs across the U.S., has become a home to exotic weed species. Exotic species are invasive/nonindigenous vegetation that are not naturally occurring in this geographic location and can negatively impact fisheries, recreation, water quality, native plant diversity, and property values. One of the most common exotic species in Michigan is Eurasian watermilfoil and this species happens to be the primary focus of management on Gravel Lake.

With any lake that has exotic species, there is always going to be a need for management. Exotic species cannot be eliminated completely but can be managed to a level where the negative impacts they create are reduced. Currently there are four herbicide control options available for Eurasian watermilfoil management, each having an appropriate time and place pending abundance, distribution and location of exotic plant growth.

Lakes that have Eurasian watermilfoil usually follow a pattern/cycle of management consisting of whole lake treatments followed by 2-4 years of spot treatments. Although this pattern of management has a high cost in the year of the whole lake treatment, it is usually followed by 2-3 years of smaller scale treatments at a much lower cost. In 2004, Gravel Lake had a considerable amount of Eurasian watermilfoil and a whole lake treatment was conducted using Sonar A.S. (fluridone) at a very low and selective rate for Eurasian watermilfoil. This treatment was highly effective and provided longer than expected control. Eurasian watermilfoil was not found on the main lake until late in the 2006 season. In 2007, Eurasian watermilfoil was present but not at levels where another whole lake treatment was feasible or necessary. In 2008, a similar strategy is being used but steps are being taken in preparation for another whole lake treatment in 2009.

Compared to other lakes, Gravel Lake has responded very well to treatments and control has been maintained for an extended period of time. Typical Michigan lakes that are highly used for recreation and have public access usually see Eurasian watermilfoil re-growth in the year following a whole lake treatment. Often, these lakes require whole lake treatments every three years. Gravel Lake is currently on year five following a whole lake treatment and had no re-growth nearly three years following that treatment. This level of control is not common and results were better than expected. As with any lake that has Eurasian watermilfoil, it is only a matter of time before it begins to take hold again. Although Gravel Lake has gone several years with minimal management, Eurasian watermilfoil is beginning to establish in different locations on the lake and spot treatments can only slow its spread. Based on these conditions, it is likely that another whole lake treatment may be required in the near future thus starting another management cycle and maintaining Eurasian watermilfoil to the minimum extent possible.

Andy Tomaszewski, Professional Lake Management



Fourth of July Events: The Results

BOAT PARADE

1. RIMES FAMILY
2. PLANKENHORNS FAMILY
3. PINKOS FAMILY

The GLA would like to thank Apollo Marine and Willow Beach Grocery for kindly donating the prizes. We couldn't do it without their help!

PADDLE BOAT REGATTA

PADDLE BOAT CLASS

1. EMILY MOORE, DANCING DANNI (DANNI YOUNG)
2. EMMA DYREK, CHRISTEN DYREK
3. CHRIS SEPUT, ZORAYA CUNAT
4. DAVE PARAMSKI, PAUL DRAGOVICH
5. MIKE PIKE, JOSH BUCK
6. PATRISHA BARKER, JENNIFER MILLER
7. ABBY OSBORN, ERIKA RAU
8. KATE SADOWSKI, TAYLOR FICIE

DNF

1. EMILY GRAHAM, TONI GONZALA
2. CRAIG BENES, ZACH BENES,
KURT KUSERELLIS, LUKE BENES

KAYAK CLASS

1. RYAN BROWN
2. ERIC HERCHENROECHER
3. HARRY LASKI
4. CARLIE DESIMONE

DNF

1. BOO REEDER

CANOE CLASS

1. AARON MESCHKE, LUKAS MESCHKE
2. STEVE PARAMSKI, STEVE O'LEARY
3. MIKE SADOWSKI, LAUREN SADOWSKI
4. KATHY SCHLUETER, STEPHANIE SCHLUETER

Thanks to our volunteers:

Gia Laski
Maggie Eggers
Dana Mauro

Thanks to all who came out to support the best Paddleboat Regatta yet! See you all next year!



9. LORI CASKEY, CAROLE DESIMONE
10. JANE CHRISTENSEN, JENNIFER KITZMILLER
11. PAUL WALTER, CONNOR WALTER
12. JOHN STOGIS, CAMRON SCHLEWITT
13. ASHLEY MICHELI, KATIE DALY
14. HANNAH DASEY, ERLUCTER MCKAY
15. DAVE SUTTON, KEVIN SUTTON
16. HARLEY REEDER, BEV REEDER



Eutrophication: Its Effects and Effective Prevention

Gravel Lake is a beautiful body of water with a healthy ecosystem. As residents of the lake, we should all be willing to do our fair share to help keep it that way. The Gravel Lake Association conducts regular treatments for the control of invasive species and algal blooms, but there is no reason that we should not still be vigilant about taking everyday precautions against nutrient pollution. Although it may not be possible to easily detect any current upset in the current ecosystem, there is still reason for concern about soil and fertilizer runoff contributing to eutrophication in Gravel Lake.

Eutrophication is the change in an ecosystem from one trophic state to a higher trophic state by the introduction of a limited nutrient. This means more growth and greater abundance of organisms otherwise limited by that nutrient. Basically, to Gravel Lake, this means an increase in plant and algae growth.

Some of the problems associated with eutrophication are the obvious nuisance to boaters and swimmers caused by an algal bloom or thick weeds, a potential for changing aquatic habitat due to new or excessive plant growth, and the potential for abundant plant mass to deoxygenate the body of water. This is especially prevalent in wintertime when plants no longer produce oxygen, but continue to absorb it. When the water becomes deoxygenated, it can lead to fish kills and changes in the speciation of resident fishes, almost always favoring less desirable species. The only way to prevent eutrophication and its associated risks is to restrict the introduction of limiting nutrients into the ecosystem.

In surface waters, the main limiting nutrient to plant and algal growth is phosphorus. Phosphorus is introduced into surface waters through erosion, runoff, or other effluent containing soil or other organic matter. Particles containing phosphorus settle to the bottom of the lake and form a pool of nutrient in the bottom sediments that is readily available to rooted plants and is released from these sediments under conditions of anoxia into the overlying water column, which is then quickly utilized by algae.

As property owners on Gravel Lake, there are a few easy things that you can do to help keep phosphorus levels in the Lake under control:

- 1) Try to prevent having exposed soil on your property. Exposed soil erodes easily into the lake through rain and wind, carrying phosphorus with it. Grass, trees, shrubbery, and other plants hold soil in its place very well. Try to get grass, sod, or other landscaping in place as soon as possible after construction or other excavation projects.
- 2) Do not use fertilizer. Even low phosphorus fertilizer contains far too much phosphorus to be used safely on lakefront property. If you need to use fertilizer, make sure it is phosphorus-free.
- 3) Try to use phosphorus-free detergents and soaps. Since almost every home on Gravel Lake is on a septic system, and these ultimately drain waste water into the Lake's watershed, common household detergents and soaps can contribute a large amount of phosphorus to the Lake.
- 4) Keep your property and beach clear of animal and yard waste. Not only will it make your property more enjoyable, but it will also keep organic matter, which contains significant amounts of phosphorus, from entering the lake

Following these simple guidelines and using other common sense approaches to prevent eutrophication, we can help keep Gravel Lake healthy and beautiful for ourselves and for generations to come.

Marc Mascarello, contributor



No More Fertilizers...Now What?

Compost Tea is the environmentally correct answer. Compost teas are full of beneficial microbes that put the life back into soil that has had its life-giving qualities removed by excess applications of chemicals: fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.

Lake associations and their membership have seen a decline in lake conditions over the years. Natural eutrophication (lake aging) is inevitable but not desirable. Tests done on samples of our lakes include but are not limited to: E.Coli, Secchi Disk, nitrogen levels, phosphorous levels, and dissolved oxygen levels. These tests are monitoring mostly human effects on our watersheds, damage due to the application of chemicals to our lakeside yards, gardens and flower beds.

When chemicals are applied the root zone is flooded with nutrients. The plants take up the nutrients they can use immediately but due to the water soluble nature of these chemicals, the rest leaches down and is no longer available to the plant. In the soil these chemical nutrients take the form of water soluble salts. These salts kill the natural biology of the soil. Plants need nutrients to live and with this "biology" gone, are forced to wait for their next "fix" of chemical fertilizer.

The excess chemicals that were not used by the plants leach into aquifers, streams and lakes causing further ecological problems. According to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection Agency:

"Phosphorus is in living things and soil, but when too much enters a lake or river, it disrupts the balance of life. Phosphorus is like "junk food" for algae (microscopic plants). Just one pound of phosphorus can produce 10,000 pounds of wet weeds and algae! When additional phosphorus gets washed into lakes and rivers, the algae grow out of control (algal bloom) reducing the visibility or clarity of the water. The lake turns green, leaving unsightly scum, foul odors and bad tasting water. In some lakes, repeated algal blooms can result in fish kills or loss of the cold water fishery (salmon, trout, etc.)."

We are fertilizing our lakes with nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. For obvious reasons we are now asked to stop applying chemical fertilizers to slow down the eutrophication we have accelerated.

Compost tea (AACT-Actively Aerated Compost Tea) is made by agitating and aerating good organic compost in water. The resulting "tea" is an organic, non-toxic, non-phosphoric soil amendment and foliar spray full of beneficial microorganisms and trace minerals. The compost tea can then be applied through hoses and sprayers as a soil drench or foliar application. The number of organisms in the original compost is magnified making the good benefits of compost go much further.

Five tips promoting organic lawn care

1. Test your soil. Send a soil sample to you local county extension service. They'll measure the soil's PH and its mineral and nutrient content. For best results, test soil in mid- to late spring or early fall.
2. Get rid of thatch. Brown patches of thatch are breeding grounds for disease, and they prevent water and fertilizer from penetrating the lawn. To remove thatch, rake vigorously with a heavy wrought-iron or bamboo rake.
3. Add compost. Top-dress with a fine layer of compost at least once a year. Spray with compost tea at least three times a year.
4. Mow grass high with a sharp blade. Never remove more that one-third of the grass blade at one time. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to return nitrogen to the soil.
5. Water infrequently but deeply to promote root growth. Always water in the morning.*

*Reprinted with Permission Lush Lawns the Organic Way- Gardening How/to July/August 2007 - www.safelawns.org

No More Fertilizers...Now What? (continued)

Being good stewards to our beautiful lakes, streams and aquifers requires us to change our actions. One very significant way to change is to STOP spoon feeding these plants and instead enhance the beneficial organisms in the soil and regenerate the biology. Applying compost tea 4-6 times per year will help regenerate this biology and in turn decrease the leaching of chemical and synthetic fertilizers into our watersheds.

Benefits of Compost Tea

- 1) Increases the growth, vigor and health of vegetables, trees, shrubs, turf, etc.
- 2) Decrease run-off and leaching of toxic chemical fertilizers
- 3) Leaves lawn and sports fields a safe place to play
- 4) Protect plants from disease causing organisms
- 5) Transform compacted soil into healthy soil
- 6) Reduce water usage
- 7) Improve nutrient retention
- 8) Detoxifies soil

For more information on compost tea contact Flowerfield Enterprises LLC, Portage, MI 269-327-0108.



Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance as of 1/1/08 \$8,702.78

Deposits

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$945.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$1,300.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$841.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$824.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$858.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$416.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$781.00 |
| Split the Pot - June Annual Meeting | \$76.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$384.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$463.00 |
| 4th of July Fun Run Profit | \$153.00 |
| Split the Pot - August Meeting | \$45.00 |
| Gravel Lake Social Ticket Sales | \$2,740.00 |
| Donation from Social | \$19.00 |
| Raffle Profits from Social | \$88.00 |
| 2008 Membership Dues | \$400.00 |

Total Deposits \$10,333.00

Expenses

| | |
|---|------------|
| The Michigan Riparian | \$304.00 |
| The Paw Paw Press | \$629.96 |
| U.S. Post Office - Stamps for Invoice Mailing & Bills | \$167.06 |
| Janice Pinkos - Reimbursement for Invoice Mailing | \$70.11 |
| Thornton Insurance Agency - Surety Bond Renewal | \$100.00 |
| Michigan Lakes & Stream - Membership Renewal | \$175.00 |
| Janice Pinkos - Reimbursement for P.O. Box Rental | \$20.00 |
| Bruce Melton - Reimbursement for Bouy Maintenance | \$25.61 |
| Laggis Fish Farm - Deposit for October Stocking | \$500.00 |
| Suzanne Reed - Reimbursement | \$144.14 |
| Craig DeSimone - Reimbursement | \$10.78 |
| Lauren Micheli - Reimbursement for 4th of July Kids Games | \$270.09 |
| Emily Moore - Reimbursement for Fun Run Event | \$71.61 |
| Mike Micheli - Reimbursement for Boat Race Events | \$20.00 |
| Melvilles - Deposit for Gravel Lake Social | \$500.00 |
| Returned Check & Fee | \$45.00 |
| JMC Studios - Website Hosting Fee | \$60.00 |
| Craig DeSimone - Reimbursement for Microphone | \$99.38 |
| Melvilles - Balance for Gravel Lake Social | \$1,000.00 |
| Jim McGreal - Balloons & Helium Tank for Social | \$23.15 |
| Auto Owners Insurance | \$202.00 |
| Newell Insurance Agency | \$921.25 |

Total Expenses \$5,359.14

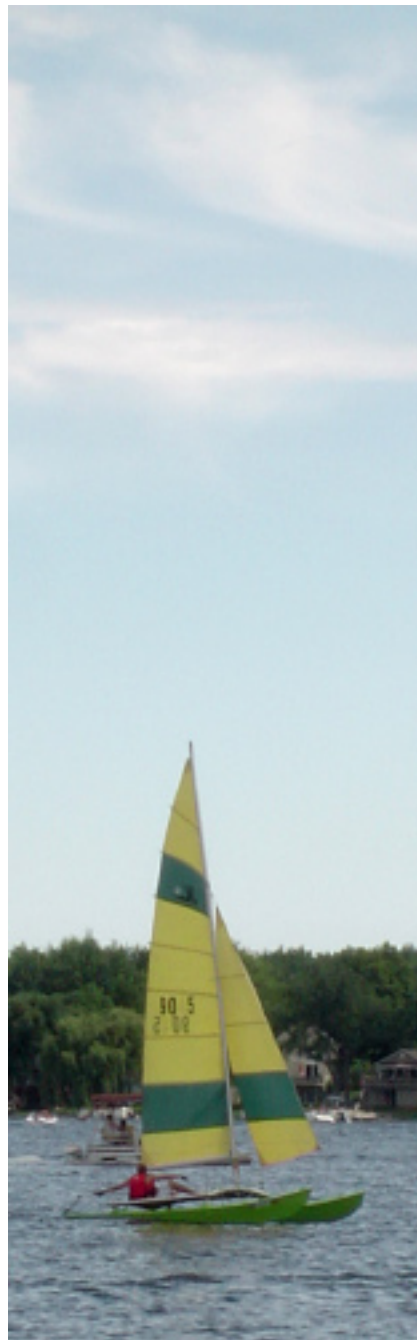
Checkbook Balance as of 8/28/08 \$13,676.64

Other Assets:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 10/12/08 | \$5,128.51 |
| Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 10/12/08 | \$5,128.51 |
| Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 12/12/08 | \$5,142.69 |

Total Other Assets \$15,399.71

Total Funds \$29,076.35



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Focus on Wildlife: The Painted Turtle



If you've been in the channel this year then you undoubtedly have seen the numerous turtles sunning themselves on the docks and in the damp grasses. Although Gravel Lake is home to a few different species of turtles the painted turtle is the most colorful and interesting variety. This turtle finds its home in lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, or rivers with soft muddy bottoms.

The carapace, or hard shell of a painted turtle can be as long as 10 inches, and in some cases even larger. This reptile is recognizable by the bright colors that can be seen on the head and neck of a turtle and the plastron. The plastron, or the underside of these turtles is most often yellow, but can also be accompanied by a beau-

tiful design or a complicated pattern of yellow and red, hence the name; painted turtle. It is not uncommon to see a painted turtle sunning itself on the shore or floating at the top of the water. Because painted turtles cannot regulate their own temperature they must rely on the sun's heat to maintain the proper temperature.

During the winter months usually starting in November and ending in March the painted turtle hibernates deep in the mud below the waters. The nearly 3 feet of mud that the turtle buries itself in insulates the turtle and keeps it from freezing during the cold winter. After the winter is over the turtles crawl out of the mud and right into mating season. From late spring to early summer the turtles lay eggs in nests that are usually dug close to the waters edge. Each mating season females may lay up to four sets, or clutches, of eggs. The female painted turtle will lay 4-14 off white oval shaped eggs at a time in holes that are dug with the parents hind feet. The holes are then covered with sand or dirt and left unattended. 72-80 days later the surviving eggs hatch and start their lives as a tiny independent turtle. The new babies will feed on larvae, crickets, maggots, tiny worms, and other carnivorous sources. As a painted turtle grows older it prefers to feed more off of its habitat's plant life than insects and worms.

When a painted turtle has an ideal location, an abundant supply of food, and good company it is an easy life. Some painted turtles have been known to live longer than 30 years! It is important to recognize however, that pollution, pesticides, and habitat destruction from humans can threaten the population of these beautiful reptiles, so be kind to our lake and keep the painted turtles happy and healthy!

Tricia Barker, contributor

Citations

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Painted Turtle | Michigan.gov.dnr http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/painted_turtle |
| Eutrophication | http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG2923.html http://www.uvm.edu/~vlrs/doc/lawnfert.htm http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-3.htm http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1620.html |

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Ingredients:

- 1 bottle red wine
- 1 1/2 cups fresh orange juice
- 1/3 cup brandy
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 nectarines pitted and cut into wedges
- 1 orange cut in half then sliced
- 1 lemon, sliced
- 1 apple, sliced
- 3 cups seltzer or club soda chilled
- Ice cubes

Directions:

1. In 3- to 4-quart pitcher, combine wine, orange juice, brandy, and sugar. Stir until sugar dissolves.
2. Stir in fruit. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 3 hours or overnight.
3. To serve, stir seltzer into pitcher. Fill glasses with ice and pour sangria.



Classified ads — Free for paid members!

A reminder to all dues-paying members that classified ads on the website are a free benefit of your membership. This includes advertising your personal business. Links to websites or color advertising can be discussed as well, but may entail a fee. Questions and ads can be emailed to Jim McGreal at jim@jmcstudios.com.

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Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2009 - December 2009

Fill out and mail to:

Gravel Lake Association, P.O. Box 531, Lawton, MI 49065

This document is also available on the website @ www.gravellake.org.

Please print clearly.

Member name(s): _____

Beach: _____ Lake Phone: _____

Gravel Lake Address: _____ Lawton, MI 49065

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please print clearly. Mail Check or Money Order payable to Gravel Lake Association

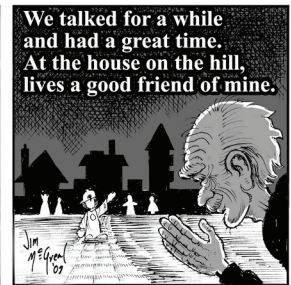
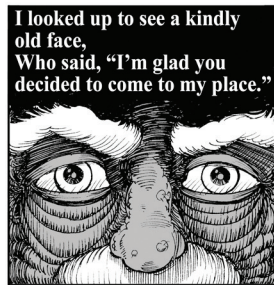
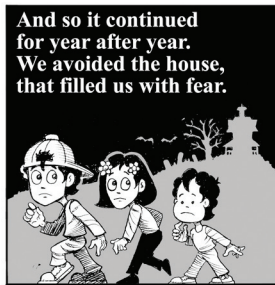
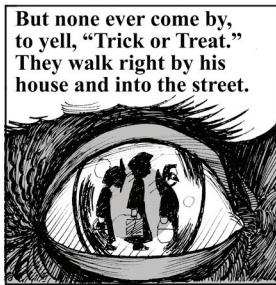
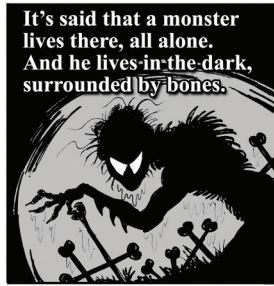
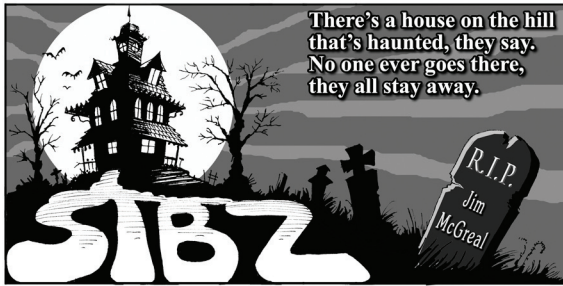
Membership dues for 2009 \$35.00

Optional Riparian magazine \$ 7.00

Additional Donation _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please indicate where your Riparian should be sent (circle one): home lake



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jim@jmcstudios.com

Advertise in The Gravel Laker!



Our newsletter goes out to all of the residents of Gravel Lake about three times a year. For rates and more information, email

Jamie Paramski, editor of The Gravel Laker, at jamie_paramski@hotmail.com.



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| Fundraising Committee | Carlie Stogis- (chair) |
| Internet Operations | Jim McGreal - jim@jmcstudios.com |
| Weed Treatment | (vacant) |

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Gravel Lake Association

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