

The Gravel Laker

Volume XX Number 1

www.gravellake.org

Spring, 2008



Photos by Eric Herchenroether

In This Issue

- President's Corner
- Weed treatment update
- Fourth of July results
- Info on walleye stocking
- Treasurer's report
- Wildlife segment
- New SIBZ comic



President's Corner

With all of the snow and cold weather, Gravel Lake is probably the furthest thing from your mind. Before you know it, though, it will be time to put the dock in and get out on the water.

While we've probably been tucked away from the elements, the Lakes Area Sewer Authority has been making steady progress with our sewer project. The authority is comprised of representatives from Marcellus, Porter, and Volinia Townships. From Gravel Lake, we have Harry Laski and Chris Oxley (Porter Township Trustee) involved. The rest of the authority includes, Gerry Melko - Chairman, John Grib - Secretary (Marcellus Township Supervisor), Paul Boshoven, Nate Bitely (Porter Township Supervisor), and Wendy Elsey (Volinia Township Supervisor). As explained previously, this authority is responsible for the progress and organization of our sewer project.

Recently, the authority decided that the best approach is to build our own plant (versus going to Lawton or Marcellus). This decision was made for the several reasons. First, better control of pricing/rates can be maintained by building our own plant—we would not be subject to the rate decisions of the local municipalities. Second, self-construction will allow for a plant with longevity—we can avoid adding on to a plant that may be technologically or environmentally outdated in the next decade or so. Finally, self-construction may reduce total construction time by several months.

Other news includes the likelihood that we will receive federal grant money for our project. Currently, the authority is still in the process of finalizing funding—this should continue through the spring. Public hearings are likely to occur this summer. Construction could begin as soon as early 2009.

This project is for real and I'm quite pleased to see it moving forward! I will continue to keep you posted with updates as I receive them. Please contact me directly with any questions.

Craig DeSimone
President - Gravel Lake Association

Weed Treatment Update

We have again successfully controlled Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) for yet another year. Our weed control contractor, Professional Lake Management, tells us that we may not need a whole lake treatment this year due to very good control of EWM. Keep in mind that unused funds can be used toward future weed treatments. Moreover, I'm compelled to remind everyone that the goal of our weed treatment program continues to be control of EWM (and Curly Leaf Pondweed)—it is not to eradicate all weeds in the lake. Resurgence of native species speaks to the success of our program. Recall the summers preceding our program where we basically had a carpet of EWM in the boat lane surrounding the entire lake. The weed situation has improved remarkably since the program has begun.

2009 is the last year of our contract with PLM. If we wish to continue to control EWM, we must decide on a method and, again, petition homeowners to pass another Special Assessment District (SAD) to cover the costs. Thus, in 2008 we will form a committee to research and recommend treatment options to the Board of Trustees. The committee will be comprised of trustees and members at large. I know many of you have strong opinions on this topic, so please get involved! Anyone interested should contact Craig DeSimone at (773) 750-5922 or cucad4@hotmail.com.



Eurasian Milfoil

2008 Weed Treatment Schedule

WEEK OF:	TYPE OF TREATMENT:
4/7/08	Water Quality Sampling
7/21/08	Spot Weed & Algae Treatment & WQ
5/12/08	Survey & Weed/Algae in Channel
8/18/08	Optional Algae, Water Quality & AVAS Survey
5/21/08	Spot Weed & Algae Treatment
6/23/08	Spot Weed & Algae Treatment

Please watch your shoreline for the posting of the 11 x 14 inch, yellow, red or green signs. The signs will indicate the date of the treatment, the products used, and any restrictions on the use of treated water for swimming, watering lawns, etc.. One or more treatments involving water restrictive products may be applied. There may be spot treating of vegetation involving water restrictive products throughout the summer.

It is important to note that treatment dates are **tentative**. According to Professional Lake Management (PLM), if weather or other circumstances create issues, treatments may be postponed until the following week. Also, if PLM comes out and sees something that they are not prepared to handle, they may come back sometime within the next week to address the issue. This will not happen without approval from the appropriate Gravel Lake authorities. Sometimes things come up between scheduled treatments and thus, PLM must deviate from the schedule. Also, there are times when treatments are scheduled, but are not needed at that time. More information is available on our website at... www.gravellake.org

Winners for the Fourth of July events:

Paddle Boat Regatta

- 1st—Stephanie Raab/Ashley Micheli
- 2nd—Beth Kruger/Ryan Sutton
- 3rd—Chris Watson/Kate Sadowski
- 4th—Paul Walter/Connor Walter
- 5th—Emily Moore/Eric Otolski
- 6th—Erica Rau/Abbi Osborn
- 7th—Jill Jilek-Wolf/Jana Jilek
- 8th—Ed Walter/Bailey
- 9th—Lori Caskey/Kurt Kussurelis/Elaine Kussurelis
- 10th—Team Paramski (Steve and Dave)

DNF—Anthony Otolski/Lexi Butts

Boat Parade

- 1st—Pinkos family (Idle Ease Beach)
- 2nd—Thomas family (Winkler Beach)
- 3rd—Osborn family (Willow Beach)



Thanks to all who participated!!!

GLA Membership Update

2006 Membership - 145

2007 Membership - 194

Of those 194:

- 22 paid by invoice that did not pay last year
- 10 paid by invoice that did not pay for the last 2 years
- 22 paid by invoice that have not paid for 3 + years

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Southside of Gravel Lake
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Walleye Stocking at Gravel Lake



Photos by Ken Hochsprung

1,000 walleye fingerlings, ranging from 6" - 8" were stocked in late October 2007. The Gravel Lake Association obtained the necessary permits from the DNR and worked with highly-recommended Laggis Fish Farm to administer the stocking. The GLA researched viability of various species with the DNR before choosing walleye. The GLA intends to repeat stocking either this year or next year. Some of you will recall that walleye were stocked in Gravel Lake in the 1980's via a statewide DNR program. Although we do not have an abundance of walleye, it is clear that some of these originally stocked walleye did reproduce. We hope to see an additional gamefish population in the lake that will actually help our panfish population.

Happy fishing!

Board of Trustees Update

Ken Hochsprung has filled the trustee vacancy on Lewis Beach. To date, Ken has been our key researcher on fish related topics and orchestrated the walleye stocking.

Kevin LaLone joined us late this summer and fills the trustee vacancy on Dugan's Landing. Many of you will remember Kevin as a long-time former resident of Willow Beach.

Karen Vaickus has resigned from her trustee position on Idle Ease after several years of service and noteworthy enthusiasm for our sewer project. Thanks for your efforts Karen!

Filling Karen's position is Jeanette Garrison. Jeanette has held just about every position except president on the Board of Trustees. We are pleased to have her vast experience back on the Board. Assisting her in some of her duties are granddaughter Kristin and grandson-in-law Tim Arnett.

Please join me in welcoming our new board members.

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.

Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance as of 1/1/07 \$19,406.59

Deposits

2006 Association Dues	\$210.00
2007/2008 Association Dues /	
Riparian Subscriptions	\$1,168.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$720.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$290.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$365.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$70.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$120.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$445.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$120.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$112.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$837.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$1,006.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$255.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$856.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$603.00
Advertising	\$110.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$602.00
Resident Phone Directory Advertising	\$210.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$743.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$672.00
Split The Pot - Annual Meeting -	
Donations from winners	\$328.00
Advertising	\$60.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$346.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$70.00
Bowling Outing Fundraiser	\$145.00
Split The Pot - August Meeting -	
Donation from winner	\$52.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$296.00
2007 Association Membership Dues	\$110.00
Golf Outing	\$144.00

Total Deposits **\$11,065.00**

Expenses

Riparian /MLSA -36 Subscriptions	\$288.00
Michigan Waterfront Alliance Membership	\$50.00
Kathy Brooks - Postage reimbursement	\$9.42
South Michigan Insurance Agency	
- Surety Bond Renewal	\$100.00
Craig DeSimone - Reimbursement for Copies	\$38.67
Janice Pinkos - Reimbursement for Printer Cartridge	
and Stamps for mailing Gravel Lake Invoices	\$179.92
Bruce Melton - No Wake Buoy	\$206.48
Bruce Melton - No Wake Buoy Supplies	\$15.31
Lawton Post Office - PO Box Rental	\$20.00
Paw Paw Press - Gravel Lake Newsletters	\$893.58
Paw Paw Press - Gravel Lake Phone Directory	\$1,277.30
Laggis' Fish Farm - Walleye Stocking Deposit	\$497.25
Michigan Lake & Streams - Membership	\$150.00
D & O Insurance	\$921.25
General Liability Insurance	\$202.00
JMC Studios - Website Hosting	\$60.00
Lauren Micheli - July 4th Kids Games	\$148.10
Laggis' Fish Farm - Walleye Stocking - Balance	\$1,571.75
Gravel Lake Association	
- Purchase 3 \$5000.00 CD's	\$15,000.00
Sign Center - Gravel Lake Association Banner	\$106.00
Suzanne Reed - Printing of Bowling Flyers	\$33.78

Total Expenses **\$21,768.81**

Checkbook Balance as of 10/20/07 \$8,702.78

Other Assets:

Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 2/12/08	\$5,000.00
Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 2/12/08	\$5,000.00
Certificate of Deposit - Maturity Date 5/12/08	\$5,000.00
Total Other Assets	\$15,000.00

Total Funds **\$23,702.78**

Chicken, Steak, or Shrimp Fajitas

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil, divided
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- Dash hot sauce
- A few dashes of Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 pounds meat (boneless, skinless chicken breast, skirt steak or peeled and deveined shrimp)
- 1 medium onion, halved and sliced lengthwise
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 8 (8-inch) flour tortillas
- 1 lime, juiced, for topping
- Sour cream, for topping
- Salsa, for topping
- Guacamole, for topping
- Cheddar cheese, shredded, for topping



Directions:

1. Slice the steak or chicken into long strips. In a heavy duty resealable plastic bag, combine 2 tablespoons of the vegetable oil, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, hot sauce, salt, pepper and your choice of meat. Seal and toss the bag around to coat. Marinate in the refrigerator. *Cook's Note: 15 minutes for shrimp, 20 minutes for chicken and 1 hour for skirt steak.
2. Preheat your cast iron servers in a preheated 400 degree F oven for at least 20 minutes, to get a good sizzle when you plate the fajitas.
3. Heat the outside grill or a large indoor grill pan to medium-high heat. Remove the meat from the marinade and place it on the hot grill, discard the marinade. Cook chicken until cooked through, about 5 minutes per side, skirt steak about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare and about 2 minutes for shrimp.
4. In a large skillet heat up the remaining 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and fry the onions and bell peppers until crisp-tender with some salt and pepper.
5. Wrap the tortillas in foil and warm them in the oven with the servers for 15 minutes.
6. When you are ready to serve, remove the cast iron servers from the oven and quickly arrange the meat and peppers and onions on it. It will immediately start to sizzle from their fat and moisture. Serve sizzling immediately with the warm tortillas and other accompaniments.

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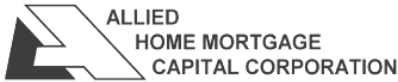
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Wildlife Segment: Northern Water Snakes!



Northern Water Snakes are a native species to Michigan. They've actually been spotted at Gravel Lake by a number of residents. While this snake may scare you, it is important to note that they are non-venomous (thus, harmless) and should not be needlessly persecuted. They are an important part of the food chain and they are an indicator of a healthier ecosystem, because we can support a larger predator. Many times the Northern Water Snake is mistaken for the Black Rat Snake and is sometimes identified as the venomous Cottonmouth or Water Moccasin (which are not native to Michigan, and are most prevalent in the East.)

Description: A water snake typically has dark bands or blotches on a light brown or gray background. Some older adult snakes may appear solid black or brown. The belly is white with reddish half moon shaped markings. Some species, however, have an orange belly speckled with brown or black. They typically range in size from two to four feet.

Habitat and Habits: These snakes inhabit the shorelines of lakes, ponds, or streams. They swim well, seeking food (frogs and fish) and safety in the water, and often bask on objects hanging over the water. Muskrat houses and beaver lodges are good places to find water snakes, which like to hide among the sticks and plant stems. They live near lakes, ponds, marshes, in peoples' houses, rivers, and canals; just about anywhere there is water. Water snakes are not venomous, but will bite if cornered or handled.

Reproduction: Females give birth to their seven to nine inch young late in summer. There are between eight and 48 babies in a litter. Unlike most reptiles, the Northern Water Snake is a live-bearer. They do not lay eggs like most snakes, rather they carry them inside their bodies and give birth to baby snakes. The mothers do not care for their young; as soon as they are born, they are on their own.

Range and Status: Northern Water Snakes are found throughout the Lower Peninsula and the eastern Upper Peninsula. Needless persecution by humans has eliminated water snakes from many places where they were once common.

Predators: Northern Water Snakes have many predators, including birds, raccoons, opossums, foxes, snapping turtles, and other snakes. They defend themselves vigorously when they are threatened. If they are picked up by an animal or person they will bite, as well as release excrement and musk. Their saliva contains an anticoagulant, which can cause its bite wounds to bleed profusely.

SOURCES: DNR website http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12145_12201-61196--,00.html. Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Water_Snak

Contact us!

We want to hear from you! Please email your questions or ideas to Jamie Paramski at jamie_paramski@hotmail.com, or to Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com. Also, stop by and take a look at our home on the web, at www.gravel-lake.org. There you will find pictures, past newsletters, minutes from recent Board of Trustee meetings, as well as the current weather at the lake.

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Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2008 - December 2008

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

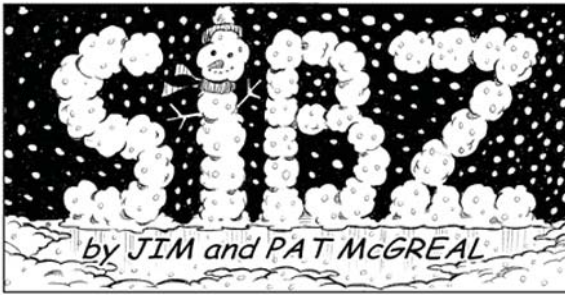
Membership dues for 2008 \$35.00

Optional Riparian magazine \$ 7.00

Additional Donation _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

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



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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