

# The Gravel Laker

Volume XVIII Number 5

www.gravellake.org

Summer, 2006



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- President's Corner
- New info on sewer implementation
- 4th of July activities
- Wildlife segment
- Boat health and the environment
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- New artwork
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## Dates to remember!

Below you will find important GLA dates, as well as community events.

Saturday, 6/17	10:00 AM	GLA Meeting @ Raab's Pole Barn
Saturday, 7/1	11:00 AM	Paddle Boat Regatta
Saturday, 7/1	12:00 PM	Kids' Games
Sunday, 7/2	10:00 AM	GL Fun Run
Sunday, 7/2	2:00 PM	Boat Parade
Tuesday, 7/4	All day event	Fourth of July
Week of July 10th	All day event	Weed treatment (tentative)
Saturday, 7/15	8:00 PM	Gravel Lake Social @ Peacock Ridge
Friday, 7/14 - Saturday, 7/15	All day event	Paw Paw Days
Saturday, 7/15	All day event	Paw Paw Annual Car & Truck Show
Mid-July	TBD	Chris Essling Memorial Vball Tourney
Saturday, 7/22	10:00 AM	Sewer Meeting @ Marcellus HS**
Week of August 7th	All day event	Weed treatment (tentative)
Saturday, 8/19 (tentative)	10:00 AM	GLA Meeting
Monday, 9/4	All day event	Labor Day
Friday, 9/8 - Sunday, 9/10	All day event	Paw Paw Wine Festival

NOTE: All times noted in Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Any announcements or schedule changes will be posted at Willow Beach Grocery.

\*\*Your attendance is very important at this event.

## President's Corner

### Sewers On Gravel Lake: About Time?

A sewer system for Gravel Lake is right around the corner...or at least it could be. What was once a sometime topic has come to the forefront. A great deal of work has been done over the winter and this spring by the sewer committee and its hardworking chairman, Ray Reed. After some back and forth with the engineering firm, Wightman & Associates, the sewer committee reviewed several project options and recommended one to the Association Board of Trustees. After a detailed presentation and review of the plan, the board endorsed the project plan as proposed by the committee. This plan will be presented at our first membership meeting on June 17th. Expect to see petitions circulating this summer. The intention is to have petitions circulated door-to-door as well as at special petition-signing meetings.

What now? If you haven't already, it's time to educate yourself. Read the information from the last newsletter and other comprehensive sewer materials online at [www.gravellake.org](http://www.gravellake.org). Once educated, PLEASE ask questions as soon as possible. Send them by e-mail or feel free to call either Ray Reed or Craig DeSimone. The committee has done its utmost to anticipate a wide array of questions, but there are bound to be some items not yet covered.

Are the sewers a done deal? No, not yet! We still must go through a petition process just like the one circulated for weed treatment. We must have over 50% of owners in favor of sewers AND the township must still decide whether or not to go forward with this venture. Again, please take the time to read the material in this issue as well as that which is on our website. For those unaware, please note that the pursuit of a sewer system is at the request of numerous individual inquiries as well as the near unanimous endorsement of the GLA members at our last membership meeting.

Please support these efforts by making an educated decision.

Here's to a great summer at Gravel Lake!

Craig DeSimone  
President, Gravel Lake Association



## Sewers on Gravel Lake

### **Why does Gravel Lake need a sewer?**

There are three main reasons to install a sewer system on Gravel Lake. First, recent changes in Michigan legislation require the replacement of inadequate septic systems with more environmentally sound wastewater treatment options. So regardless, some changes will have to be made in the near future, sewer or no sewer. Second, a sewer system will ensure clean drinking water, free of coliform bacteria and toxic nitrates. Finally, a sewer system will help keep the lake free of plant nutrients seeping in from even normally functioning septic systems, ensuring the health of our lake for generations to come.

### **What are these recent legislative acts that require more responsible wastewater management?**

Michigan 2004 House Bill 6106 requires, among other things, the replacement of all inadequate septic systems by the year 2014. The vast majority of systems on Gravel Lake would not pass code, considering the small lot size and proximity to surface water. Not only that, but the current septic systems would need to be replaced by something like a holding tank, which is both expensive and inconvenient to maintain, compared to a sewer system.

### **Why is it more important to install sewers sooner rather than later?**

It is imperative that we take a proactive approach to preventing wastewater from entering Gravel Lake. Lakes contaminated by wastewater pose a health threat. Disease-causing organisms present in wastewater can cause dysentery, cholera, typhoid and Hepatitis A. Nitrates can contaminate drinking water, which can lead to illness in humans and animals, including blue baby syndrome, which affects an infant's ability to carry oxygen in its blood. Other nutrients, primarily phosphorous, can promote algae and weed growth in lakes. This depletes oxygen levels, which in turn kills fish and other aquatic life. It also makes the lake less appealing and more difficult to navigate.

Routine tests of water quality on Gravel Lake, funded by the GLA, suggest that water quality has already become a problem on Gravel Lake. There have been elevated levels of E. coli bacteria in certain areas, near to the point of causing restriction on recreational activities like swimming. In addition, increased phosphate levels have been shown to be present in the lake. This leads to unnatural eutrophication of algae and aquatic plants, the effects of which have been seen time and again the last few years with a spike in weed and algal growth. Irreversible nitrate contamination is also becoming a problem for certain ground water wells in the area. For the future and health of our lake, we must stop these trends, and sewers are an excellent means.

(Sewers, continued from previous page)

**What is the estimated project cost, and how was it determined?**

The total cost was estimated at roughly \$7.5 million. This was determined through the detailed study and preliminary design completed over the past several months by engineering firm Wightman and Associates. These estimates are only preliminary, and based on the information generated for the study. Many factors can affect final costs including final design, routing, restoration of roads, construction conditions, and changing material costs.

**I care about the health of my family, the lake, and the community, but what will this project mean for my household?**

A rate structure must be developed that will repay the capital costs of the project as well as treatment charges. The rate structure would include a monthly charge to cover operation, maintenance, treatment costs, and a portion of the capital costs; and would include a benefit fee for each connection, and other costs, as described below.

**Monthly Rate:** This would be a flat monthly charge that each customer would pay based upon the number of residence equivalent units (REUs) assigned to the customer. A single-family residence (1 REU) would pay the base monthly rate of \$38. An apartment building, mobile home park, or resort would pay a monthly rate based upon its REU factor. These charges may go up or down as costs may dictate.

**Benefit Fee:** This would be a flat fee assessed to each customer connected to the system. Our current estimate states a \$6,100 benefit fee per household.

**Parcel Fee:** In addition to the benefit fee for each household, each taxable parcel will incur an approximate \$2,000 fee (likely, the maximum). An owner may be able to combine certain parcels to avoid multiple parcel fees.

**Other Costs:** In addition to the monthly sewer rates and assessments, property owners can expect to incur the following expenses in connection to the project.

- a) Septic System Abandonment - Each household will be responsible for closing their septic system in conformity with County Health Department regulations.
- b) Service Connection, Gravity - Each household will have to connect to the system from the building to the wye at the property line. A typical complete connection will cost between \$500 and \$1,500.
- c) Service Connection, Pumped - Some property owners whose land is well below the elevation of the sewer will have to utilize an individual grinder pump or sewage ejector to access the sewer system. A typical installed price for such a system is \$1,500 to \$3,000, which includes the force main.

(Sewers, continued from previous page)

**Overall, how much total will this sewer system cost me?**

Our current estimates place the cost per household at somewhere around \$9,100 (total mode cost per household: parcel fee + benefit fee + hook-up costs) to construct, and somewhere near \$38 per month (or \$456 per year) to maintain and operate the system.

**I would like to sign on, but I'm afraid I cannot afford that amount. What can I do?**

First of all it should be understood that the approximate \$9,100 fee will be divided a number of ways, the majority of which will be financed within tax assessments over the next 40 years. This means somewhere around an additional \$400 per year assessment added to your township property taxes. If you are on a fixed income and legitimately cannot afford that additional cost, there are still other options besides selling.

The State of Michigan and the Federal Government have programs available for persons that qualify under the income guidelines. Generally, detailed information is required for the approval. The subsidy is usually tied to the title of the property and is collected as a lien at some future sale.

**Is there a threat of lowering the lake level by removing our wastewater from the water cycle?**

No. The amount of water that could be lost from the aquifer is inconsequential compared to other groundwater usage, like local crop irrigation; and it is microscopic compared with the amounts normally lost to evaporation and the amount gained by rainfall.

**Will there be a charge for someone who builds after the system is complete?**

Yes. Anyone who connects to this system after its completion will pay at least the normal fees and assessments (though usually more), and the monthly rates of those currently billed will be lowered accordingly.

**Won't the presence of a sewer system on a lake tempt large scale developers?**

Having a lake community with access to sewers could be very tempting to a large scale developer, though on Gravel Lake, this is not too great a concern. First of all, Gravel Lake is very isolated and rural. There is no need for high density housing in the area, so large scale development is not very likely. This is more of a concern for lakes that are not far from developing areas and towns or cities. Additionally, if this type of development becomes a possibility, Gravel Lake as a community has the power to fight it, through rezoning ordinances through the Township. Furthermore, Porter Township already has several ordinances in place (such as anti-funneling and anti-keyholing ordinances) to protect against such development. Finally, we have a community organization (The Gravel Lake Association) that has experience working with the Township, and the ability to get petitions signed. As long as the community stands against high density development, it cannot happen.

(Sewers, continued from previous page)

### **How will the project affect my property values?**

In most communities, the installation of public sewers has a very positive effect on property values. Homeowners generally experience an increase in value in excess of the sewer assessment, according to information from Wightman & Associates.

### **What payment options do homeowners have?**

- 1) The balance may be paid in full at any time during the 40-year period.
- 2) Payment may be made on an annual basis as part of the property tax bill.  
(Payments are tax-deductible, but interest is not.)
- 3) A Home Equity Loan or reverse Mortgage Loan may be taken.  
(Payments and interest are both tax-deductible.)

### **What can we do if we oppose the assessment?**

After the assessment hearing, property owners can protest the assessment and if unresolved, the state tax tribunal will hear the case and issue a decision. This is available for all property owners affected by the project.

Some of these details are subject to change, but we do not anticipate substantial differences. Any changes will be widely communicated.

A complete and indexed version of this Q & A document will be distributed by the Gravel Lake Association soon. Please refer to that document for further answers about the sewer project.

Factual information for this article was provided by (1) Wightman and Associates, (2) The State of Michigan, (3) the Gravel Lake Association, and (4) the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

This document was prepared by Marc Mascarello (of Willow Beach) with assistance from the sewer committee.



## Weed Treatment Update

The Porter Township Board of Trustees approved our petition request to create another Special Assessment District (SAD) around Gravel Lake. The SAD will last for another four years to cover continued weed treatment around the lake. Due to leftover funds from the last SAD, yearly assessments will decrease. After this SAD ends in four years, the lake association Board of Trustees intends to reevaluate weed treatment options as well as obtain bids from multiple contractors. Furthermore, the board intends to be more vigilant with additional spot treatments for both native and non-native species should they be appropriate. Expect weed treatments, if needed, around the week of the June 5th, July 10th, and August 7th (tentatively).

Professional Lake Management (PLM) does not anticipate that Gravel Lake will need a lot of treatment this year. According to Andy Tomaszewski (our PLM representative), "...sometimes milfoil can 'pop' a few years after Sonar treatment. I would not rule out the possibility that some treatment may be needed later in the year...As of right now, the only problems facing [Gravel Lake] are the exotic species contained in the channel. Keeping them controlled will be important in keeping them from spreading to the rest of the lake."

As far as the native plant species are concerned, he goes on to say that, "Native plants can vary from year to year, so it is impossible to determine what will be needed in regards to native plant control, if anything."

For more details, review the material provided on [www.gravellake.org](http://www.gravellake.org).



Eurasian Milfoil

### Weed Treatment Tentative Timeline:

<b>Week of:</b>	<b>Type of Treatment:</b>
3/27/06	Spring Water Quality
5/30/06	Survey
6/5/06	Spot weed and algae treatment if needed
7/10/06	Survey, Spot Weed, Algae, & WQ
8/7/06	Spot weed and algae treatment if needed
8/29/06	Fall Water Quality & AVAS Survey

## Boat Health and the Environment

No doubt about it- boating is a huge part of summer fun. It is important to note, however, that boats and PWCs play a major role in water quality. Here are some tips for keeping your boat operating smoothly, while at the same time, not compromising the surrounding environment.

### Engine Maintenance

Everyone is here to have a good time on the water in the summer. And when we want to use our boats to go skiing, or cruising around, we want the boat to start and operate smoothly. This is why engine maintenance is so important. When we turn the ignition key, we expect to hear the engine hum to life, not the sputter and struggle. Performing routine maintenance will not only keep your boat operating smoothly, but it will keep your boat from damaging the environment as well. Keeping your engine healthy will help it to use fuel more efficiently, reduce fuel consumption, and last longer. It will also discharge fewer pollutants into the water. Here are some tips for keeping an engine healthy:

- Follow the maintenance schedule recommended by the manufacturer.
- Use oil recommended by the manufacturer. When changing your oil, be sure to wipe up spills immediately, and properly dispose of the used oil.
- If your engine does not have oil injection, carefully measure the oil you mix with your gasoline. Too much oil in the mixture creates inefficient burning, and thus pollution. Conversely, too little oil can cause significant engine damage.
- Inspect your rubber fuel lines regularly. The alcohol content of unleaded fuels has a tendency to deteriorate fuel line hoses, sometimes in a matter of months. Signs of deterioration in the hoses include dry, cracked or mushy spots.
- Many manufacturers recommend checking most battery connections and tubing every 50-100 hours.

### Fueling Your Boat

When fueling your boat, regardless of whether you are on land or the water, be sure to use caution. A single quart of oil can pollute an area of up to two acres of water. Other boat fluids can pollute the surrounding environment as well, including gasoline, grease, transmission fluid, and antifreeze. In addition, it is estimated that 90% of oil that ends up in the water each year comes from polluted runoff, improperly disposed used oil, bilge water, outboard motors, and careless fueling habits.

Obviously, fueling on land on a driveway or at a gas station will cause the least amount of damage to the environment. When fueling in the water however, it is imperative that the person fueling pay extra-close attention to what they are doing. They should never leave the fuel nozzle unattended for any amount of time. Also, don't overfill your tank. Know your tank's capacity and learn to gauge the amount of fuel you need. It is a good idea to have towels or rags on hand when fueling so you can wipe up spills immediately.



(Boat Health, continued from previous page)

### **Washing Your Boat**

Products used to wash boat hulls and decks often contain toxic ingredients such as chlorine, phosphates, sodium, and ammonia. These chemicals are toxic to marine life, as well as detrimental to water quality. Wood preservatives, such as stains and strippers, pose a great risk to the environment as well. When possible, apply the following alternatives to your cleaning regimen:

If you need:

General cleanser, Borox paste  
Aluminum cleanser  
Fiberglass stain remover  
Mildew remover

Try this home remedy:

Bicarbonate of soda and vinegar  
2T of cream of tartar in 1 quart of hot water  
Baking soda toothpaste  
Paste using equal parts of either lemon juice and salt or vinegar and salt.

The best place to wash your boat is on the trailer in a grassy area, where excess water can seep into the ground and be filtered by the soil. The chemicals will find their way into the water if you wash your boat too close to the body of water. If you must clean your boat in the water, use cleaning supplies sparingly. Rather than dousing the boat, apply a small amount on a cloth and wipe it up rather than splashing it back into the water.

### **Bilge Care**

Virtually every boater has most likely noticed that the water that has collected in the bilge might have an oily appearance. This is caused from oil leaks from numerous lubricated parts of the engine that mixes with water entering the bilge. To prevent this, fix those small leaks that allow oil to drip into the bilge. Also, keep an aluminum or plastic tray in the bilge as a containment device. Once oil has seeped into the bilge, use oil absorbent pads to capture the surface oil before pumping the water over. This will help to minimize the amount of oil that goes into the water. You should never add liquid detergents to bilge water. The chemicals only disperse the oil and can ruin the bilge pump. Use enzyme-based bilge cleaners to clean your bilge. These are very effective and non-polluting.

### **Trash**

Most people would not even consider throwing their trash overboard. However, trash sometimes ends up in the lake by accident. Cigarette butts, for example, should not be thrown into the lake. A simple solution for the disposal of these is to simply put them into a can or bottle, and throw that away when you get onshore. Many times, pollution such as candy wrappers, plastic bags, and paper towels get blown into the lake from a gust of wind. It is a good idea to keep a trash bag on the boat that is weighted down. That way, there is a place for the trash.

Tangled fishing line is sometimes deemed unusable and is thrown into the water. This can be very damaging to turtles, birds, fish, and other water-dwellers. Please keep all trash on your boat and throw it away in its proper place onshore.

(Boat Health, continued from previous page)

Finally, do not dispose of human or animal waste in the water. This leads to many problems on the lake, from excessive plant growth to raised E.coli levels.

When out boating this summer, please keep these thoughts in mind. This will help us to keep the water quality at Gravel Lake as good as it can be. Pollution is not an issue at Gravel Lake currently, so let's keep taking precautionary steps to actively keep it a healthy lake. It is much easier to prevent pollution, than it is to try to clean up a polluted lake.

Happy boating, everyone!

## Let the Festivities Begin: 4th of July Events

**Please note: All events are noted in Michigan (EST) time.**

4th of July Event Schedule			
Saturday, July 1		Sunday, July 2	
11:00 AM	Paddle Boat Regatta	10:00 AM	2-mile Fun Run
12:00 PM	Kid's Games	2:00 PM	Boat Parade

### The Paddle Boat Regatta

This event will kick off the 4th of July festivities. All you need is a paddle boat, a life vest for each member of the team, and fast feet! The race begins at 11:00 AM on Saturday (7/1) in front of Willow Beach Grocery. There is a \$1 entry fee to participate (to fund prizes and benefit the GLA). All ages welcome! The Kids' Games immediately follow the Paddle Boat Regatta, so come for the paddle boat race and stay for the games!

### Kids' Games

The annual Kids' Games will take place on Saturday (7/1) at noon in front of Willow Beach Grocery, immediately following the Paddle Boat Regatta. There's a goodie bag for all participants and all ages are welcome. This event is always fun for kids and parents alike. Be sure to bring the camera! Double the fun--come early to participate in the Paddle Boat Regatta!



Kids Games

A special thanks to Barbara Wagar Curley at Premier Properties SW for her generous donation to the 4th of July Kids' Games.

(4th Activities, continued from previous page)

**Gravel Lake 2-mile Fun Run**

Runners and walkers, take your marks! Get ready...get set...GO! Test your athletic ability on Sunday (7/2) at the annual Gravel Lake 2-mile Fun Run. We will gather in front of Willow Beach resort shortly before 10AM. Pre-register by June 24th to get a t-shirt. Cost for the race is \$10 with a t-shirt and \$4 without. Pre-registration forms can be found at Willow Beach resort. Any questions can be directed to Emily Moore at 219-393-0204 or via email at elmo\_moe\_moore@hotmail.com.



Fun Run

**Boat Parade**

Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jacks! This year's theme is "Take me out to the ballgame!" Pay tribute to your favorite baseball team on Sunday (7/2). Meet in front of Willow Beach Grocery a little before 2:00 PM. If you want to be included in the decorating contest, please register at Willow Beach Grocery prior to Sunday. You will receive a number to be affixed to the side of your boat so that the judges on shore will be able to identify your boat. There will be prizes awarded to the best decorations. There is no cost for this event.



Boat Parade

**Chris Essling Memorial Volleyball Tournament**

Calling all volleyball players! This event is unconfirmed at presstime, but will most likely take place either the second or third weekend in July. Start thinking about your teams, and stay tuned for more details. Any info will be posted at Willow Beach Grocery.

**Gravel Lake Social**

The 3rd annual Gravel Lake Social is a fun mixer where you can meet new friends on Gravel Lake, and reminisce with old ones! This event will take place on Saturday, 7/15 at Peacock Ridge on M-40 from 8-12 PM. There will be a DJ, dancing, food, and cash bar. Tickets are \$10 presale (sold by beach trustee, at Willow Beach Grocery, and at the GLA meeting on June 17th) and \$15 at the door the night of the event.

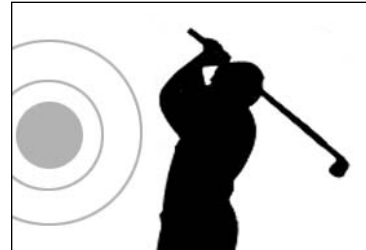


C.E.M. Volleyball Tournament

(4th Activities, continued from previous page)

**Gravel Lake Golf Outing**

As of right now, the golf outing is unconfirmed. According to Suzanne Reed, it is likely that the event will take place, however at this time, a date has yet to be determined. If you are interested in participating, please contact Suzanne Reed at 269-808-0327 or via email at redrazor25@yahoo.com.



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## Letter to the Editor

In August 1995, my wife and I purchased lakefront property on the Lewis Beach section of Gravel Lake. Included in the purchase were two back lots that were zoned for single family dwelling that can be built upon.

Contained in the plat of Lewis Beach is a "park" with 60 ft. of frontage on Gravel Lake. The value of our back lots depended greatly on the use of the park contained in the plat. Simple logic told us that if our building site lots had full riparian rights, then the value of our new investment would be much higher.

We decided to have an attorney give us an opinion on the legal use of the "park" in our subdivision. He went on to say that the plat dedication indicates: "the drive, road and park shown on said plat are hereby dedicated to the use of the owners of the lots in this plat."

Traditionally, parks and easements that front on bodies of water, carry with them a dedication of access to the water. In *Jacob's vs. Lyon Township*, 199 Mich. App. 667 (1993), the court dealt with issues of dedication of property for public or multiple use and the court held:

"Members of the public who are entitled access to navigable waters have the right to use the surface of the water in a reasonable manner for such activities as boating, fishing and swimming. Right to anchor boats temporarily is an incident of public's right of navigation".

He also went on to say:

"It would be inconsistent for the courts to condone permanent dockage of boats or the construction of piers to provide dockage for non-riparian owners in the subdivision. Furthermore, the maintenance of boat lifts and the mooring of boats or jet ski lifts is clearly not within the permitted uses covered by the Court".

I have studied every subdivision plat on Gravel Lake and there isn't any language anywhere to support the current uses on many of the easements around the lake. The language must specifically indicate that piers/docks/mooring is acceptable. Typical language indicates an "all inclusive" ownership from every plat member, meaning docks, boats and personal belongings would be a violation of intent.

Riparian Rights in Michigan clearly states that "Back lot owners cannot construct docks or moor boats on lake bottomland." This document is available from the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, and has been posted on the Gravel Lake website.

There's one particular easement on the lake that has a total of 16 ft. of frontage. A subdivision back lot owner has a pier, a boat lift and a pontoon which literally consumes more than the size of the easement. I've studied the plat in that subdivision and the easement is intended for the use of "everyone" in the plat and has no support for one back lot person staking claim.

(Letter to the Editor, continued from previous page)

For some reason, people think easements are solely intended for back lot use only. Every plat dedication on Gravel Lake is all inclusive and is written for all property owners in their particular subdivision. A person staking claim of an easement by putting a dock, a boat lift or mooring a boat, ignores the rights of everyone else in the subdivision, including lake front owners.

In the past this subject has caused great controversy. Instead of creating anger, I would invite those of you who agree or disagree to share your thoughts with the rest of the community. Respond with a rebuttal letter stating your views, if you like. In order to help us all with a greater understanding, I've come up with some questions you could focus on to get started:

- 1) Can you provide a document showing language such as a legal "land use" or a "dedication" in your subdivision plat that supports your claim?
- 2) Do you think that every back lot neighbor has the same rights of boat dockage on the easement as you?
- 3) Is it OK if one of your back lot neighbors sneaks their dock or boat lift before yours next spring?
- 4) How many boats, boat lifts, pontoons and jet ski's are you entitled to have on the easement?
- 5) Once you have your boat lift in place, does that entitle you to stake claim to that particular piece of bottomland forever, and why?
- 6) Do you think lake front owners in your subdivision have the same rights to the easement as you do?
- 7) If every slot on the dock is full and your neighbor wants to add their boat, will you give up your slot or will you make the dock longer to accommodate everyone?

Sincerely,

Chip Van Schoyck

*Editor's Note:*

*Due to numerous inquiries regarding this topic, we have posted additional objective material on the Gravel Lake website, for informational and educational purposes. Direct further Letters to the Editor to Jamie Paramski, at [jamie\\_paramski@hotmail.com](mailto:jamie_paramski@hotmail.com).*

## Etiquette for Land Dwellers

Gravel Lake is a summer retreat for many people to enjoy, whether you are a year-round resident, or you come up on weekends.. In the summer months, the lake houses are full of people-- residents, friends, family, children, grandparents, etc. In order to make sure everyone has an enjoyable stay at Gravel Lake, please be sure to abide by these simple requests.

- Please be aware of- and yield to- the speed limit on our lake roads. There are animals, and children everywhere. Please respect their safety and use caution when operating vehicles near or around them.
- As you bike, jog, or walk, please watch and listen for cars on the road. Also, please walk along one side of the road, preferably against traffic, so you can see oncoming cars and they can see you. Do not walk/ run / bike down the middle of the road.
- Please drive ATVs slowly, and with caution.
- If you have a dog, please keep it on a leash or tied up in your yard. Many lake residents and children enjoy biking, jogging, and walking around the lake. No one should feel frightened when they are enjoying a day at Gravel Lake. Remember, your dog may be harmless to you, but many children and adults are scared of dogs. Also, dogs tend to act differently towards strangers than they do to their own "family." Please be courteous to your fellow lakers, and keep dogs behind fences or tied up.

Gravel Lake is a safe and happy place to live, visit, or vacation. Let's keep it that way! Thank you in advance for your efforts.



*Premier  
Properties*

SW

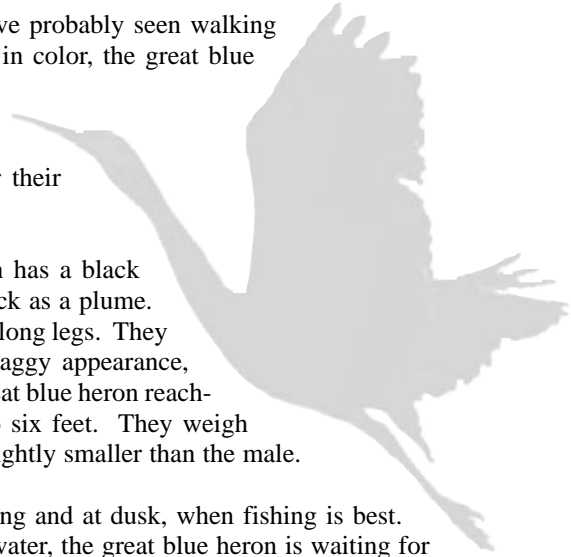
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## Focus on Wildlife: The Great Blue Heron

There is a graceful, elegant bird that most residents have probably seen walking slowly along the shoreline of Gravel Lake. Blue-gray in color, the great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) is a familiar fixture on almost any body of water. Whether it is a lake, a river, a swamp, the ocean, or a shallow pond, these birds can be seen wading through the water, patiently searching for their next meal.

In addition to the blue-gray color, the great blue heron has a black stripe above each eye that extends to the back of the neck as a plume. Their bill is long and yellowish in color. They have very long legs. They also have very long, S-shaped necks, which have a shaggy appearance, thanks to excess plumage in the lower neck area. The great blue heron reaches 38 to 54 inches in height, with a wingspan of up to six feet. They weigh between five and eight pounds, with the female being slightly smaller than the male.



The great blue heron prefers to hunt alone in the morning and at dusk, when fishing is best. While wading through (or simply standing in) shallow water, the great blue heron is waiting for a fish to get close enough to scoop up in its mouth. In addition to fish, the heron eats frogs, salamanders, snakes, small mammals, land insects, birds, and some plants. They typically swallow their prey whole, unless it is too large.

The great blue heron always lives near sources of water, including rivers, lakes, marshes, swamps, or the ocean. They live in social groups called a heronry, which can include up to 100 members. Herons nest high up in trees, on rock ledges, and on the ground as well. These animals are very sensitive to disturbance; they therefore tend to live far from human activity and development. They are very territorial and will aggressively defend their nests.

In the nest, both parents incubate the eggs. The eggs hatch after 26-30 days of incubation. Once the chicks have hatched, they live in the nest for two months, until they are old enough to survive on their own. 69% of blue herons do not live past one year. Those that do not survive die either from starvation, or they are pushed from the nest. Others die from falling prey to other animals, or from running into fences or utility wires. For those that do survive, their lifespan in the wild is typically 15 years. Their predators include eagles, raccoons, bears, vultures, and hawks.

In the early 19th and 20th centuries, the herons were killed for their plumage, which was used as decoration. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 prohibited the killing of these birds and saved the great blue heron (and many other species) from extinction. Today, while the population of the great blue heron is stable, their only threat is that of human development. Disturbances can disrupt the whole heronry, thus losing an entire generation from that cluster.



## GLA Updates and Reports

### Personnel News

Harry Laski and Chip Van Schoyck have resigned from their positions as Vice President and trustee of Lewis Beach, respectively, due to increasing occupational demands. Also, John Deren has resigned as trustee of Huff's Landing after serving a total of 29 years on the Board.

Suzanne Reed was elected as our new Vice President by the Board of Trustees. Suzanne has served as trustee on Sandy Beach for three years. She has helped with various fundraising events, and was instrumental in the channel mouth dredging project. Suzanne will retain responsibilities to Sandy Beach while we search for a replacement. Her husband, Ray, is our sewer committee chairman. Anyone interested in serving on Sandy Beach should contact Craig DeSimone or Suzanne Reed for more details.

We are also seeking a motivated and enthusiastic individual to fill the position on Lewis Beach. A resident/owner from Lewis Beach would be ideal, but we would gladly accept help from a willing person on another beach.

Judy Weis has resigned from her position as trustee on Willow Beach due to family reasons. Her position will not be actively filled as both the board president (DeSimone) and secretary (Brooks) can represent that beach. Carole DeSimone, of Willow Beach, has agreed to distribute lake association materials, but will not serve formally as trustee. Interested parties can inquire with Craig DeSimone about the position.

In addition, Carlie DeSimone has been elected to serve as trustee to Gebhard Beach. Carlie has helped with various GLA events and projects over the past several years. Another recent change to the Board of Trustees is that Doug Murphy, formerly the Gebhard Beach trustee, will now be representing Huff's Landing.

A great deal of thanks to Harry, Judy, Chip, and John for their steadfast support of the Gravel Lake Association, and welcome to our newcomers.

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## Treasurers Report

<b>Beginning Balance as of 1/1/06</b>		<b>\$17,318.48</b>
<b>Deposits</b>		
2006 Association Dues	\$70.00	
2006 Association Dues	\$490.00	
2006 Association Dues	\$559.00	
2006 Association Dues	\$399.00	
2006 Association Dues	\$50.00	
Advertising	\$300.00	
<b>Total Deposits</b>		<b>\$1,868.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Riparian / MLSA -37 Subscriptions	\$259.00	
Superior Imaging - Printing & Distribution of newsletters	\$575.00	
JMC Studios - Renewal for Hosting Gravel Lake Website	\$60.00	
Michigan Waterfront Alliance - Membership	\$50.00	
Michigan Lake & Stream Associates - Membership	\$150.00	
South Michigan Ins. Agency - Surety Bond Renewal	\$100.00	
Returned Check & Fee	\$35.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$1,229.00</b>
<b>Checkbook Balance as of 5/20/06</b>		<b>\$17,957.48</b>

## Fundraising Committee Event Profitability 2005 Report

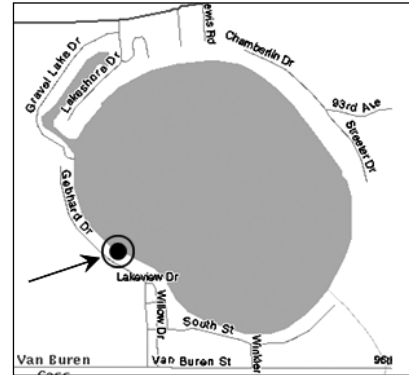
The Gravel Lake Association Fundraising Committee works to come up with events to help raise money to benefit the GLA. Below you will find a summary of the Fundraising Committee's events and profits from 2005. If you have an idea for an event, or another way to help raise money for the GLA, please email Lauren Micheli at [lauren\\_micheli@hotmail.com](mailto:lauren_micheli@hotmail.com).

<b>Event</b>	<b>Profit</b>
"Split the Pot" raffle at 2 meetings	\$178.00
Social	\$1,632.70
Golf Outing	\$760.30
Koozie sales	\$70.00
<b>Total Profit for 2005</b>	<b>\$2,641.00</b>

## Gravel Lake Association Meeting

**When?** Saturday, June 17th and Saturday, August 19th  
**What time?** 10 AM (EST)  
**Where?** Ron & Sue Raab's pole barn on Gebhard Beach  
(see map)

- Win money at the 50/50 Raffle!  
(\$100.00 max. prize) Come early to buy tickets!
- The sewer project- lots of information available,  
ask questions, voice your concerns.
- Details on 4th of July activities
- Weed updates
- Other lake issues



From Van Buren St., follow Gebhard Dr. past the Willow Beach Resort. It's the first pole barn on the west side of Gebhard Dr. (next to a volleyball court). Please bring a lawn chair as only a limited amount of seating will be provided.



Come visit us for casual dining, as well as Michigan's largest selection of imported beers. We also serve cocktails and offer a full menu.

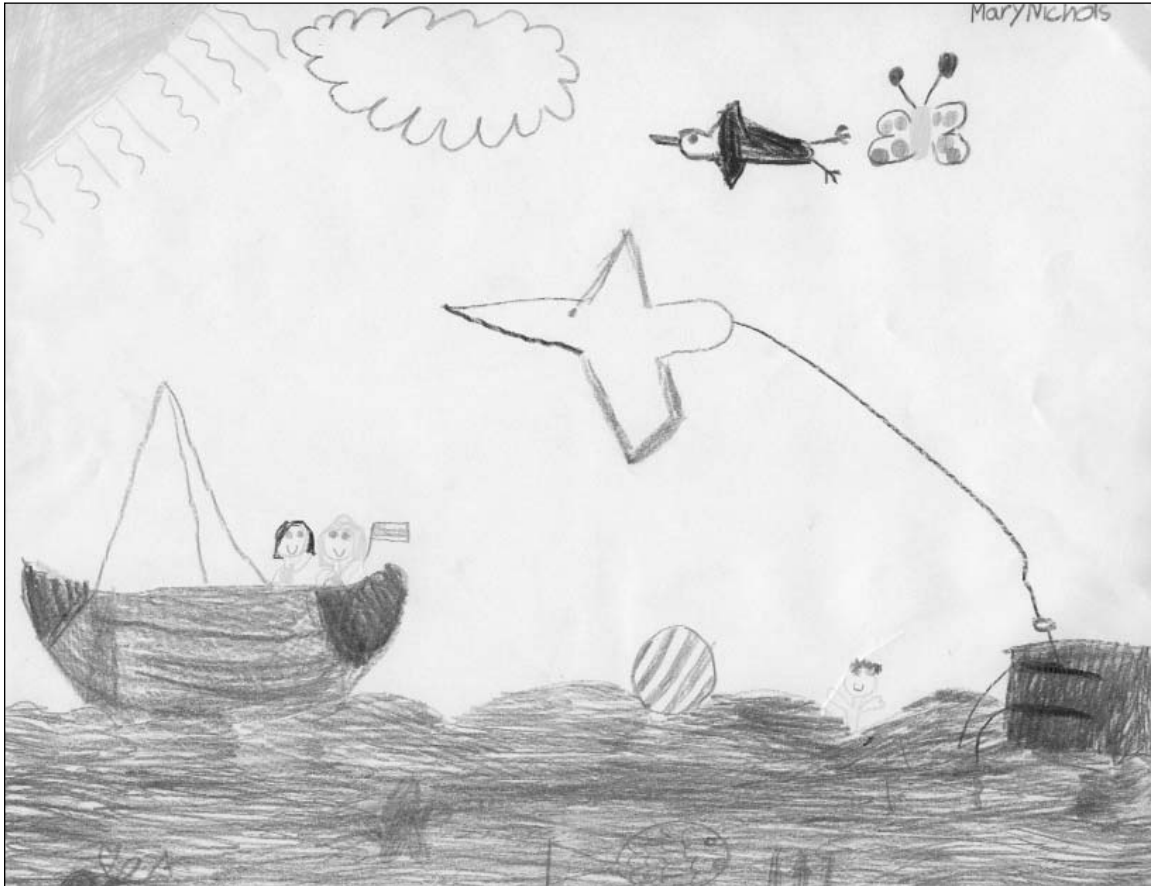
155 N Main Street, Lawton, MI 49065

Phone: 269.624.1200



## Tiny Artist Gallery

Picture drawn by Mary Nichols, who came up to visit the Paramski family on Huff's Landing last summer.



Submit your child's Gravel Lake drawing to [jamie\\_paramski@hotmail.com](mailto:jamie_paramski@hotmail.com)!

### **Contact us!**

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

Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2006 - December 2006

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](http://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 2005 \$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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**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.

<b>Board of Trustees Contact List</b>	
<b><u>GLA Officers</u></b>	
<b>President</b>	Craig DeSimone cucad4@hotmail.com
<b>Vice President</b>	Suzanne Reed
<b>Secretary</b>	Kathy Brooks
<b>Treasurer</b>	Janice Pinkos
<b><u>Trustees</u></b>	
<b>Chamberlin Beach</b>	Bruce Melton
<b>Dugan's Landing</b>	Vicki Laski
<b>Gebhard Beach</b>	Carlie DeSimone
<b>Huff's Landing</b>	Doug Murphy
<b>Idle Ease Beach</b>	Karen Vaickus
<b>Lewis Beach</b>	(vacant)
<b>Sandy Beach</b>	Tom Flavin Mark Fortney
<b>Streeter Beach</b>	Debbie Dorsey Donna DeRosa
<b>Willow Beach</b>	(vacant)
<b>Winkler Beach</b>	Pat Murray Paul Galassi
<b><u>Other contributors</u></b>	
<b>Editor, Gravel Laker</b>	Jamie Paramski jamie_paramski@hotmail.com
<b>Sewer Committee</b>	Ray Reed (chair) redrazor25@yahoo.com
<b>Fundraising Committee</b>	Lauren Micheli (chair)
<b>Channel Committee</b>	Art Earl (chair)
<b>Internet Operations</b>	Jim McGreal jim@jmcstudios.com

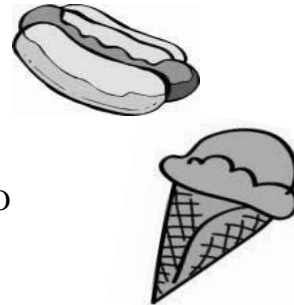
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Marcellus, MI 49067

## Citations

### **The Great Blue Heron**

- <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/i1940id.html>
- <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/5960/bheron.html>
- [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Great\\_Blue\\_Heron.html#map](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Great_Blue_Heron.html#map)
- [http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Ardea\\_herodias.html](http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Ardea_herodias.html)
- Heron Majesty. Lake Tides Newsletter. p. 8-9.

### **Boat Health and the Environment**

- "Delaware Coast-A-Syst; Environmental Stewardship for Homeowners."
- Delaware DNR and Environmental Control Division of Water Resources.
- [http://www.takemefishing.org/files/basic\\_boat\\_care.pdf](http://www.takemefishing.org/files/basic_boat_care.pdf)

### **Sewers**

- Wightman and Associates
- The State of Michigan
- The Gravel Lake Association
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality



## Gravel Lake Association

P.O. Box 531  
Lawton, MI 49065  
[www.gravellake.org](http://www.gravellake.org)

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