

The Gravel Laker

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Summer, 2009



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President's Corner

We're getting closer!

Our sewer project continues to roll along. As this goes to print, we expect construction to begin in August. Expect the worst and hope for the best. We will be in a construction zone for the duration of this project. There will be some inconveniences for owners as this project moves around the lake. We've heard that higher traffic roads will likely be saved for the fall as it will be easier for construction crews to work. This effort is a long time coming and was first attempted in the 1980s. Finally, we are close to completing what will arguably be the best thing we can do for the environmental health of Gravel Lake.

See you on the lake!

Craig DeSimone
President - Gravel Lake Association

Fourth of July Festivities 2009

Here is this year's Fourth of July Activity line-up. Please note that all times are in Michigan time. And be sure to send your pictures to Jim McGreal at jim@jmcstudios.com so they can be uploaded to the Gravel Lake website.

Paddle Boat Regatta - Friday, July 3 @ 3:30 PM

Racers should report to the Public Access at 3:30PM. The race will begin promptly at 4:00. There are three divisions: Paddle boats, personal kayaks, and two-person kayaks/canoes. There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each division. There is no entry fee.

Fun Run - Saturday, July 4 @ 10:00 AM

Participants will run or walk a two mile course that begins and ends at Willow Beach Resort. There is a \$4 entry fee.

Boat Parade - Saturday, July 4 @ 1:00 PM

This year's theme is the Rockin' Fifties! So break out the poodle skirt, hula hoops, and Vitalis!

Kid's Games - Sunday, July 5th @ 12:00 PM

As in years past, the Kid's Games will take place at Willow Beach Grocery. There is no entry fee.



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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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Gasoline and Oil: Their Environmental Impact at Gravel Lake

The issues of gasoline and oil contamination do not get much attention from most Gravel Laker, but they are something everyone could be contributing to daily. Every time someone fills a boat's gas tank, empties an oily bilge, or operates a PWC or other two-stroke engine, a certain amount of gasoline or oil enters the lake. Although most of the hydrocarbons that make up the vast majority of these substances will not cause long-term harm to the ecosystem, they contain many chemicals that may be harmful even in trace amounts or others that can build up over time to cause serious harm.

Gasoline

Gasoline enters the lake in two ways: spillage, which occurs commonly during refueling of watercrafts, and also through the regular operation of certain watercrafts. Although the vast majority of the hydrocarbons contained in gasoline will evaporate and photodegrade harmlessly in a matter of hours to weeks, some of its components will end up staying in the ecosystem for much longer or even permanently. Gasoline's most potentially harmful constituents are benzene and lead. Even unleaded gasoline contains trace amounts of lead.

The main source of environmental Benzene is gasoline. Benzene is a toxic, carcinogenic hydrocarbon that is resistant to photodegradation. During the time that benzene is in the water column, it has the potential to be absorbed by contact or ingestion by organisms, and is thus a potential danger after gasoline spills or continuous introduction into the environment.

Lead, like all toxic heavy metals, cumulatively builds up with exposure, both in ecosystems and organisms. It is known to be damaging to almost every organ in the body, especially the central nervous system. Lead can be ingested either from the lake directly, or when it seeps into groundwater. While the present concentration of lead in Gravel Lake is not dangerous, if too much lead accumulates in the lake, it could be permanently contaminated.

Oil

Motor oil commonly enters the lake from the bilge of inboard engines that may be leaking oil, or through the regular operation of two-stroke engines, the most common system for outboard engines and personal watercrafts. Motor oil can have adverse effects on organisms such as sublethal and lethal toxicity by contact, physical coating by the oil, incorporation of the oil into tissues, and in large amounts, habitat alteration. The most harmful components of used motor oil are polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and the toxic heavy metals cadmium and lead.

PAHs are known carcinogens that accumulate in animal tissue with exposure. These hydrocarbons are very slow to break down in the environment. Uptake of PAHs occurs via absorption of hydrocarbons on the skin, via dissolved hydrocarbons from the water diffusing through the skin, and through ingestion of hydrocarbon-contaminated food. PAHs were the first scientifically known carcinogens. If they build up in Gravel Lake too greatly, they could cause serious long-term harm to both the ecosystem and residents.

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What you can do to help

There are some steps you can take to help reduce your contribution of these harmful agents. Doing your part to help will ensure that the lake is healthy for generations to come.

1) If you see that there is oil in your bilge, look into oil-absorbent pads or pillows that can be placed in the bilge. Maintain them regularly, and dispose of them properly. These pads or pillows repel water, but absorb oil. They are available from many sources online or from many marinas.

2) Fill your fuel tank off the water if possible. Otherwise fill it slowly and carefully and be sure to absorb any spillage.

3) If you use an outboard or a PWC, consider changing to a four-stroke engine. Although they are more expensive than their two-stroke counterparts, four-stroke engines have a longer engine life expectancy, are much more fuel efficient, and run significantly cleaner and quieter. 25 to 30% of the fuel and oil of two-stroke engines is discharged unburned with a portion lingering in the water column for a period of time.

4) Do not use any coal tar based sealant for any paved areas you may have. These sealants have been shown to increase the PAH concentration in local watersheds by as much as 1000 times. Some municipalities have banned their use.

5) Do not dump any motor oil in or around the lake. If you see anyone doing this, contact the local authorities. This action carries serious penalties. The used oil from one vehicle is enough to severely contaminate one million gallons of fresh water.

Marc Mascarello, Contributor

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Seasonal Fish Kills

Nobody wants to see dead fish floating in the water or washing up on their beach. Dead fish will always be a common sight though, since even large predator fish have a death rate of about 50% annually. When many dead fish have been spotted in a short span of time, residents tend to notice and may be alarmed. There is not necessarily any cause for alarm however, since this is likely either a coincidence or has been caused by a natural phenomenon known as seasonal fish kill.

Seasonal fish kills occur in many of Michigan's lakes and streams. While it is possible that a fish kill can occur from pollution or the misuse of herbicides or other chemicals, these instances have been very rare historically. When a fish kill is observed, it is almost exclusively due to seasonal environmental factors. These happen at different times of year, due primarily to specific sets of conditions.

Winter Kill

Winter kill is the most common type of fish kill, and when severe, it can be devastating to fish populations. It is caused by oxygen depletion in the water that occurs for a number of reasons. Aquatic plants have stopped producing oxygen and have started absorbing it instead. The frozen surface prevents atmospheric oxygen from dissolving into the water, and fish, other organisms, and even bacteria are still consuming the limited supply of dissolved oxygen. When the oxygen concentration drops below a certain level, about 2ppm for most species, the fish begin to die. After a winter kill, fish tend to be noticed after bloating and floating to the surface when the water warms in the early spring. The most likely fish to be killed in winter kills are trout, followed by bluegills, bass, and walleye. Pike, perch, and pumpkinseed are relatively tolerant to low oxygen levels, and will usually survive winter kills.

Spring Kill

Spring kills occur when fish have survived the winter, but die around May and June when the water is rapidly warming. They are typically much smaller in scale than winter kills and end within a few weeks. Fish at this time are subject to a number of stresses that could result in death. The metabolism of the fish increases as the water warms, and the fish undertake strenuous spawning activities. At the same time, lake activity begins to churn up deeper, oxygen depleted water, and parasites and disease-causing bacteria increase in activity. Fish that spawn in the springtime are most likely to be killed, including bluegills, crappies, bass, perch, pike, and suckers.

Paw Paw Press Ad

Summer Kill

Summer kills can occur occasionally during extremely hot summer days where high temperature and low dissolved oxygen cause excessive stress to fish. A hot, sunny day can cause a bloom of algae or plant life, which over the course of the night will deplete the dissolved oxygen around them to a critical level before dawn. Fish in the area cannot always sense the anoxia and swim elsewhere, so many could die.

What You Can Do

Generally fish kills are harmless in the long run, since lakes typically have thousands of fish per acre. But if they are consistently large in scale, their effect may disrupt the balance of the ecosystem. Infrequently, fish kills indicate habitat or pollution problems we may be able to correct.

There are a few actions that people can take to help deter natural fish kills. Keeping nutrients from entering the lake from sources such as septic waste, fertilized lawns and yard waste can go a long way in preventing plant growth from reaching potentially dangerous levels. Excessive plant growth is the main contributor to winter kills and summer kills.

The DNR asks you to e-mail information regarding all fish kills to DNR-FISH-Report-Fish-Kills@michigan.gov.

If you suspect a fish kill is caused by non-natural causes, they ask you to call your nearest DNR location or Michigan's Pollution Emergency Alert System (800) 292-4706.

Marc Mascarello, Contributor

Weed Treatment Update

Our first weed treatment should have already occurred by the time this is read. Expect spot treatments as needed throughout the summer. We are not scheduled to receive a full lake treatment (Sonar treatment) this year because we have better than expected control of Eurasian Watermilfoil. Additionally, our weed treatment contract with Professional Lake Management expires at the end of this season. The Gravel Lake Association weed treatment committee has been soliciting bids from various providers.

We have researched and requested several treatment methodologies including herbicide treatment (current methodology) and weed-eating weevils. The committee will provide a recommendation to the Board of Trustees and a decision will be made later this year. Anyone interested in participating on the weed treatment committee should contact Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com.



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Goodbye, Dear Friend

Gravel Lake has lost one its greatest supporters this year. Gloria Caskey passed away this January. During her 30+ years on the lake, Gloria was a very active member of the Gravel Lake Association who worked hard for our weed treatment program and advocated heavily for our sewer project. More importantly, Gloria always put family and friends first. She was loving and loyal to the utmost. During her battle with cancer, she exhibited a strength and grace that remains as a lasting example to those closest to her. Gloria is survived by her husband, John, and daughters, Anne and Lori.

She will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

Gravel Lake's First Annual Chili Cook-Off

The First Annual Chili Cook-Off was a fantastic kick-off for summer on Gravel Lake. It took place on Sunday, May 24th. With 22 delicious chilis to sample and enjoy, a bean bag tournament, 50/50 raffle, and friends from all areas of our beautiful lake, the Chili Cook-Off was a hit! Judy Simpriski said, "It was a great idea, it brought a lot of people from around the lake together."

Amongst other treats, pots of chili were set up on tables as far as the eye could see. Lakers were able to sample any chili they wanted and each person was allotted two votes for their favorite picks.

There were a variety of chilies to savor at the Memorial Day weekend cook-off. Tasters enjoyed the standard meat and beans chilies, chicken chilies, spicy chilies, creamy chilies and more. Each contestant was able to give their chili a special name to showcase their dish.

When everyone's belly was full and the votes were tallied the winner for best chili went to Harry Laski of Dugan's Landing. Harry's "666 Chili" was a hot and spicy, delicious trip for the taste buds. 2nd place went to the name that came with a warning; "Porcelain Princess". And with an honorable mention in third place was "Irie Chili" that reportedly took 31 hours to make! Missy Dunigan was quoted saying, "Very tasty. It was a difficult decision."

We would like to express our appreciation to the Steve and Dave Paramski for thinking up and putting on this great family and friends event. Also, a special thanks to the Raabs and the DeSimone's for hosting the event on Gebhard beach. Thanks to all who participated and came out for the First Annual Chili Cook-Off. We hope to do it again next year, so get your chili recipes perfected for 2010!

List of Chilies:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 666 Chili | 8. Irie Chili | 15. Get Your Tums |
| 2. Chillen Chicken Chili | 9. Chili To Go | 16. Hannah's Chili |
| 3. Czeck Chicken Chili | 10. White Hot Chili With Corn Bread | 17. Yard Bird Chili |
| 4. Channel Chili | 11. Not So Chilly Chili | 18. Hot Bowl of A** (HBOA) |
| 5. Fiesta Chili | 12. Slider Chili | 19. -no name- |
| 6. Fart Wayne Chili | 13. Raabchur | 20. Gobble It Up Chili |
| 7. Chili Chili Bang Bang | 14. Porcelain Princess | 21. -no name- |
| | | 22. Chili Simpatico |



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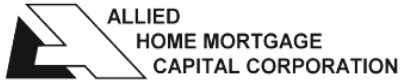
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Focus on Wildlife: All About Catfish!



Gravel Lake is home to an abundance of wildlife, most notably fish. Our freshwater lake has many fish inhabitants like bass, perch, blue gill, rock bass, and crappie. One of the most distinguishable fish in Gravel Lake is the catfish. Catfish are notorious for having catlike whiskers, called barbells, sprouting from their mouths. This bony fish also lacks one of the major characteristics of most fish; scales! Their slender bodies and are usually speckled along the sides. Catfish also have very heavy spines along their backs.



Catfish are usually found lurking in the deeper areas of the lake on their own, and they are rarely found traveling in schools. Catfish are mostly omnivorous which means they eat both plants and animals. The main feeding habits of these fish are to scour the bottom of the lake for plant and animal matter. There are many subtypes of catfish and their size can range from being as tiny as one centimeter, to several feet long. In 2005, what is thought to be the world's largest catfish was caught in Thailand. Its size was measured at nine feet long!

One of the more common types of catfish, the channel catfish is known to show courting rituals before spawning. After catfish lay eggs the fertilization is external and the eggs are guarded in a nest by the male. Usually the eggs will hatch within 6-10 days. These fish can live up to 16 years!

Because catfish can be found all over the world they have become very popular meal options. Over rice, grilled, topped with lemon, catfish are one of the most popular fish worldwide to dine on. These fish are very high in Vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids. Because of their popularity in the restaurant world, catfish are now farmed and raised to sell for a profit.

Catfish are swimming around our lake right now, so keep an eye out for this interesting fish. If you catch one, though, be sure to watch out for the spines along their back. The catfish will try to defend itself by raising its spines and potentially injuring its predator!

Tricia Barker, Contributor



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Gravel Lake Recipes



Tex-Mex Burger with Cajun Mayo

This recipe spices up the traditional burger. Cajun spices mayo is the perfect compliment to these spicy beef burgers.

Ingredients:

½ cup mayonnaise
1 tsp. Cajun seasoning
1 1/3 pounds ground beef sirloin
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped
½ cup diced white onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning
Worcestershire sauce
4 slices pepperjack cheese
4 hamburger buns, split
4 leaves lettuce
4 slices tomato

Directions:

1. Preheat grill for medium-high heat. In a small bowl, mix together the mayonnaise and 1 tsp. Cajun seasoning. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the ground sirloin, jalapeño pepper, onion, garlic, 1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning, and Worcestershire sauce using your hands. Divide into four balls, and flatten into patties.
3. Lightly oil the grilling surface, and place the patties on the grill. Cook for about five minutes per side, or until well done. During the last two minutes, lay a slice of cheese on top of each patty. Spread the seasoned mayonnaise onto the insides of the buns. Put burgers in the buns, and top with lettuce and tomato to serve.



Blueberry Cobbler

This recipe works great with other cobbler fruit and is an excellent light dessert that isn't too sweet. Serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Ingredients:

3 cups fresh blueberries
3 Tbsp white sugar
1/3 cup orange juice
2/3 cup all-purpose flour
¼ tsp baking powder
1 pinch salt
½ cup butter, softened
½ cup white sugar
1 egg
½ tsp vanilla extract

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In an 8-inch square baking dish, mix blueberries, 3 Tbsp. sugar, and orange juice. Set aside. In a small bowl, thoroughly mix flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, cream butter and ½ cup sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla extract. Gradually add flour mixture, stirring just until ingredients are combined. Drop batter by rounded tablespoons over blueberry mixture. Try to cover as much of filling as possible.
4. Bake in preheated oven for 35-40 minutes, until topping is golden brown and filling is bubbling.

Send your favorite recipes to jamie_paramski@hotmail.com.

Sewer Update

Sewer Connection Procedure

Residents will be notified 90 days before it is time to hook up to the sewer. At that time permits will be available at the Authority's official office, which is the Porter Township Hall, Van Buren County, Michigan. The cost for the permit is TBD and this includes the cost of a final inspection. The permit forms must be filled out including the installation drawing for the final inspection. The permit applications are to be signed by the contractor or the homeowner. After the permit is issued, the connection to the sewer can be installed. The entire length of the connection cannot be backfilled until after the inspection.

Pipe Materials and Construction Methods

Pipe materials shall be Schedule 40 PVC or equivalent with glued or premium joints. Primer shall be purple dye tinted so that it is visible during inspection. All materials and installation shall be in accordance with applicable plumbing codes. Pipe must be laid from the house to the line with a fall of 1/8-inch per foot for 4-inch pipe. Minimum depth of bury is 18-inches.

Connection to the Sewer Tap

The connection to the 6-inch public sewer tap shall be made with flexible rubber connectors with stainless steel bands, Fernco or equal (watertight). If 6-inch pipe is used, it shall be a 6" by 6" connector and if 4-inch pipes are used it shall be a 6" by 4" connector.

Cleanouts

One cleanout shall be installed at the connection of the private sewer to the public sewer. This cleanout shall be terminated 2-inches below the grade with a watertight plug. Additional cleanouts shall be installed, one at the house connection and then one for every 100-feet of service length and at every change of direction. All cleanouts shall be permanently marked by a 1/2 x 18-inch rebar taped to the cleanout and set 2-inches below the grade.

Sewage Ejector Pumps

An electrical permit is required for a sewage ejector. The cost of the permit is TBD. It is contingent on whether there will be a 110V or 220V circuit and whether or not there is an alarm installed. If an additional inspection fee is required it will be TBD for each inspector visit. The ejector pumps must be sized for the needed flow and head conditions. The maximum dose per cycle of the pump shall be 100 gallons, minimum of 50 gallons. The sewage ejector shall be installed in a tank designed for intended use. The tank must provide a maximum of 100-gallons per dose. The forcemain from the sewage ejector shall be a minimum of 2-inch diameter unless an approved grinder pump is used. The forcemain shall be terminated into the side of the cleanout at the public sewer no less than 6-inches above the invert with a watertight fitting. Access at the grade to the ejector or grinder pump is recommended.

Septic Tanks

All septic tanks must be pumped by a licensed waste hauler and filled. The plumbing inspector must see that they are disabled and filled, so do not cover until they have been inspected.

This is a sanitary sewer only. No eaves or sump pumps shall be hooked to the system.

Billing for Service

Once there has been a final inspection, the billing for the use of the sewer will begin the following month or at the end of 90 days whatever comes first. The monthly usage fee is \$45.00

Contact Information

On Site Representative
Dave Mitchell
Cell Phone: (269) 449-6845

Easement Questions
Attorney Harold Schuitmaker
Office Phone: (269) 657-3177
Email: pamstrong@scsck.com

Project Manager for
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Citations

Gasoline and Oil

1) United States Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry-- <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxpro2.html>

2) Michigan Department of Environmental Quality--
<http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3312-47978--,00.html>

3) United States Geological Survey-- http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article_pf.asp?ID=2077

Seasonal Fish Kills

1) James Schneider, Michigan DNR Fisheries Division, April 1996--
<http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364-119822--,00.html>

Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2009 - December 2009

Fill out and mail to:

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

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Gravel Lake.Org

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Welcome to Gravel Lake.Org! We are the official website for the Gravel Lake Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of Gravel Lake and its surroundings.

Our goal is to keep our community informed with news and events which affect our lake and to share in the rich history of Gravel Lake, past, present and future.

Please let us know what you'd like to see on this site.

Important Notice:

There have been reports of your metal shovels on Gravel Lake (near the bridge, etc.). Please return your shovel to the association or to the area where you found it.

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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