



News & Views

Newsletter of Your Crooked Lake Texas Association

From Your CLTA President

Water, water, everywhere! With near-record precipitation from last fall through the winter, our lake level has reached an all-time high, (at least since the days we began to keep monthly records.) The lake level is now 895.65 feet, (10,747.8 inches), above sea level. Several years ago the CLTA membership established a Target Lake Level of 895.45 feet, (10,745.43 inches), above sea level. This means we are 2.37 inches ABOVE our Target Level. Last fall the CLTA Board recognized this possibility and we turned the pump off in early December. The pump will remain off until the lake level drops below the Target Lake Level, which it will likely do once we get into warmer weather.

This raises another point, what about the well and pump? As you recall, and as we have stated previously, our well is performing very poorly. All efforts to clean it and improve its performance have been unsuccessful. We simply need a new well. This, I'm sure, will seem unnecessary to some residents during a time when our lake level is so high. Some may argue, "See, we told you it was cyclical and the lake level would return to its higher level." Yes, you could very well be correct, but how long does the cycle last? Five years? Three years? One year? It is very important that we do not allow ourselves to have a short-term memory. It was only a few short years ago when we were experiencing drought conditions and an extremely low lake level. As the adage goes, "Don't wait for the roof to leak before you repair it."

Now is the time to replace the well. We have a solid balance in our Special Assessment District fund, especially since we've saved on electrical costs by not running the pump over the winter. The Board is committed to finding an appropriate site for a new well. This is not an easy task. We will need to find a property owner willing to give us a site for the new well, including easement agreements to assure the lake association that the well will remain operable even if the property changes hands. The site will need to be accessible for the drilling rigs, and will require reasonable access to electricity to run the pump. The Board is exploring options but welcomes any resident input on possible locations for the new well.

For more information on the lake level and the well project, we encourage you to attend the 2009 CLTA Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 7:00 p.m., Texas Township Hall. This is our annual meeting in which topics such as our budgets, lake quality testing results, and resident comments and concerns are discussed. We hope you will join us for this important meeting.

This newsletter also contains an application to send in your Association dues for 2009. This year the dues are once again only \$35.00. This money is used for such items as communication, (newsletters and web site), Fun Day, Michigan Lakes & Streams Association dues, Riparian subscriptions, insurance and taxes, Purple Loosestrife abatement and miscellaneous lake association projects. We would hope all lake residents would want to take an

active role in their lake association by remaining or becoming dues paying members.

This newsletter also contains information and reminders about preventing phosphorus from entering the lake, boating safety, and Board membership. Please take a few minutes to read it thoroughly.

And finally, I'd like to thank my fellow Board members Fred Bowman, Dot DeYoung, Arleigh Smyrnios, Nancy Clark, Rodney Nintz, Joanne Becker, and Joe Pennington for their time and commitment this past year as we have dealt with several key issues facing our lake association. We have met several times over the last year and I deeply value their wisdom, insight, and dedication as we've tried our best to serve the best interests of all lake residents. Joanne, Nancy, Joe, and Dot's terms expire in May but they have agreed to continue serving on the Board with your votes at the Annual Meeting. If there are any other lake residents who would like to serve on the Board, please notify me prior to the Annual Meeting.

We are committed to communicating with the lake residents and will continue to keep you informed. Please check our web site: www.crookedlaketexas.com for periodic updates.

Sincerely,
Jim Hackenberg, CLTA Board President
375-1792 jkhacken@comcast.net

Don't forget!

CROOKED LAKE TEXAS ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday May 20 7:00 PM
Texas Township Hall

Come and Share your Thoughts on

Lake Level and Well Status
Lake Quality Monitoring
Purple Loosestrife Project
Election of Board Members

Purple Loosestrife

This will be the third summer that Purple Loosestrife beetles will be 'planted' around the edge of Crooked Lake where the beautiful but invasive Purple Loosestrife is growing. The plant is considered to be an environmental threat because it forms dense stands that choke out native plant and animal habitats. Each Purple Loosestrife plant produces as many as 2.5 million seeds, which can remain viable for up to a decade before sprouting. The plant can be pulled out by hand in its first year of growth, but even tiny bits of root remaining can produce plants the next year.

Last spring, in response to a request from the Board, lake residents gave donations totaling \$440 which was added to money budgeted by the CLTA Board. With that money we purchased the species of beetle called *galerucella californiensis*, which is plant specific and has shown promise in defoliating Loosestrife. The beetles have been introduced around Kalamazoo County and other areas with positive, although not immediate, results. On the CLTA web site are photographs showing some of the damage the beetles have done to plants along the shore of our lake.

The beetles are grown at Vicksburg High School in conjunction with the Kalamazoo Nature Center, costing \$40 for each container which includes many adult beetles and some larva.

Although we believe a lot of the beetles we purchased the last two years have reproduced and their offspring will continue munching Purple Loosestrife, we plan to augment their numbers by purchasing more beetles as they become available in June. As before, the Board has budgeted money to purchase beetles, but we are again asking lake residents to donate funds to increase the number of containers we can purchase.

If you are interested in being part of the group working to eliminate Purple Loosestrife from Crooked Lake Texas, please contact Nancy Clark at 372-8009 or clarknb@yahoo.com. Donations should be made out to Crooked Lake Texas Association with Purple Loosestrife on the Memo line. Mail to Fred Bowman, 400 W. Crooked Lk. Dr., Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

Preventing Phosphorus From Entering the Lake

From Michigan Clean Water Corps:

"Phosphorus is one of several essential nutrients that algae need to grow and reproduce. For most lakes in Michigan, phosphorus is the influencing factor for algal growth. The total amount of phosphorus in the water is used to predict the level of productivity and eutrophication in a lake. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element that is found in rocks and soil. Humans use and dispose of phosphorus on a daily basis in common items such as fertilizers, food, and cleaning agents. Lakes with developed watersheds often receive a portion of the human-generated phosphorus through runoff, septic leachate, and other sources."

So, what exactly does this mean? Phosphorus is the main element that nurtures weed growth. As stewards of the lake we all need to take responsible actions to curtail the introduction of phosphorus in our lake.

Key Things We All Can Do

Do not use fertilizers that contain phosphorus. There are commercial fertilizers available that do not contain phosphorus. A green lawn does look great, but a green lake does not.

Do not burn leaves on or near the shoreline. The ashes left behind contain phosphorus that feeds the growth of weeds. Even if you are burning away from the shoreline, runoff from rain can still leach this phosphorus into the lake. Not only is this detrimental to our lake, but burning leaves also is a public nuisance to many lake residents. We have several residents with respiratory issues and the thick smoke from burning leaves raises health concerns. The Township offers free leaf drop-off in the spring and fall and most waste disposal firms offer yard waste disposal. Please refrain from burning leaves.

If you still have a septic tank, consider hooking up to the city sewer line. Most of the homes on Crooked Lake Texas are hooked up to city sewer, but there are still a few homes that are not.

If you have dogs or pets that do their "duty" outside, please clean up after them. As you walk along the streets surrounding our lake you will see several rain drains. Any animal waste left along the road finds its way to these drains and into the lake. It may seem like this is a very small matter, but as we know, everything we can do to improve our lake quality benefits us all.

And finally, while not limited to phosphorus, please remember to thoroughly clean watercraft that has been in other lakes before putting them into Crooked Lake Texas. Boats that have been in other lakes could potentially bring in invasive animal and plant species such as zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil. Just ask our neighbors on Eagle Lake how devastating Eurasian milfoil can be to a lake, and how expensive it is to chemically treat the lake.

I know we may sound like a broken record as we repeatedly make these points, but education on these matters is critical. Our beautiful lake is our most important asset as lake property owners. We share the lake in many ways, and we share the responsibility of caring for it. Please do your part in maintaining our lake quality.

Lake Safety

As we anxiously look forward to getting our boats and PWCs back onto the lake, please make sure you follow safe boating practices.

Every year we receive calls from concerned lake residents who witness unsafe boating behaviors by people who are either unaware that their actions are unsafe, or choose to operate in a reckless manner. Our Crooked Lake Texas web site: www.crookedlaketexas.com has a link to the Michigan Boating Laws and Regulations. Every lake resident should take the time to review these regulations, especially those pertaining to Personal Watercraft (PWC).

Last year the Kalamazoo Sheriffs Department increased their patrols on Crooked Lake Texas and issued several tickets. Many of these tickets were issued simply because people were not familiar with the Michigan Boating Laws and Regulations. It's worth the time to review these thoroughly with all family members. No one wants a ticket, but more importantly no one wants to see someone get hurt or killed. Please enjoy your lake responsibly.

Respecting Our Shores

Yes, we're excited about getting out our boats, pontoons, and personal watercraft out and beginning to cruise the lake. As we do this, we all need to remember to take a stewardship role in protecting our beaches and water quality as well as respecting the lakes and waterways laws.

When we are near ANY shore, we need to slow down to no wake speed. For new lake residents and boaters the term *no wake* means going at such a speed as to produce no "wake" (no waves coming from the watercraft). It is not a particular speed limit; it is whatever will cause no waves, thus resulting in the minimum erosion to a shoreline and the minimum of top soil and chemicals washed into the water. Areas that are narrow also do not have to be posted as a no wake zone to be under the law. It is the law that if you are within 100 feet of the shore you must produce no wake. The only exception to this is if you are taking off or dropping off a skier.

Our channel is posted with no wake buoys each boating season. Jim Hackenberg and Fred Bowman have braved the cold waters each spring to put them in and anchor them. Honoring these zones becomes especially important now with our lake levels at record highs. The shores of our channel are particularly vulnerable to the backwash created by boat wakes. This is because a greater volume of traffic goes through this area near the shoreline than anywhere else on the lake. There has already been considerable caving and erosion from natural wave action. We as boaters create far more havoc than natural causes when we fail to respect our no wake areas...and the resulting soil erosion can also influence the channel's depth.

Lake Association Dues Form / Current Information Sheet

2009 Annual Dues are \$35. Please fill in the information below in order that we can keep our records current.

Name(s) _____

Lake Address _____

Mailing Address (if different) _____

Phone(s) _____ E-mail address _____

Do you want to receive the Riparian? Yes No (Please circle one.)

The Riparian is the Michigan Lakes and Streams Publication about our state's waterways. The association provides it at no cost to any paid member. Because it is a cost to the association, if you do not want it, please help us save the cost.

Make your **check payable to Crooked Lake Texas Association.**

Mail to Fred Bowman, Treasurer, 400 W. Crooked Lk. Dr. OR bring payment to the annual meeting.

Fred Bowman
400 West Crooked Lake Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

