

Hamilton Lake Happenings

Volume 4, Issue 1

Exciting Future Plans

To improve communication:

- Trine University students are redesigning a new website for HLA. Check it out in the spring.

Notes from the Board:

"Fly the flag proudly on your boat or dock to show your support for Hamilton Lake."

The only way to receive a flag is to pay your weed spray dues which makes you a "full member" with voting privileges. The other option is become a "supporting member" in which you can receive a sticker (see invoice enclosed for more details).

Membership in HLA and weed spray donations are not technically mandatory. However, any person who enjoys, uses, lives on the lake or in Hamilton benefits from the lake and should feel responsible for doing their part.

Thank you for your support,

HLA Board of Directors

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January 2018

HLA Annual Report for 2017

The Hamilton Lake Association (HLA) is actively involved in water testing for ecoli and ammonia so that our lake is beautiful and safe for swimming, boating, and fishing. Alarming high numbers have increased due to fertilizers/organic materials and potential increase in CAFOs (Confined Animal Feeding Operations). We are working with local and county agencies to help us find solutions. The Steuben County Health Department has become very involved in the monitoring process.

Water quality issues (specifically outlined on page 2) will be our future

focus.

HLA has increased communication to keep in touch with lake residents through Social Media, Facebook, and the HLA website.

The annual meeting, held in June, updated the membership on the upcoming season; Aquatic Management and DNR are traditionally invited to answer any questions.

The active HLA "Buoy Boys" did a weekly run to replace buoys, as well as check on weeds & the general condition of the lake.

The fundraising efforts included membership dues with HLA flags, the HL (Hamilton Lake) stickers, a



raffle for a paddle board, and the annual, highly successful, Boat Poker Run (held on the last Saturday of July); see the below article. All monies are used for weed spray and lake improvements.

The HLA meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Town Hall at 7PM April—October.

All are welcome!

7th Annual Boat Poker Run Success



Each year's poker run continues to be more successful than the previous year's. 1290 tickets

were sold this year! Every year the event grows. We are truly grateful to Tonya Peters, Linda Calvin & Jan Biddle for all their hard work and dedication! They work tirelessly to 1) find loca-

tions for the registrations and boat stops; 2) solicit donations from businesses and individuals; and 3) **sign up 100s of volunteers.** If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know! Thanks to all who donated, volunteered, and participated! Your commitment makes this

event increasingly enjoyable; the monies made continue to help keep our lake clean and healthy. We are looking forward to reaching a new goal in 2018. So make your calendar for the **8th Annual Poker Run on Saturday... July 28, 2018 (always the last Saturday in July).**

Sometimes It Takes a Crisis Pete Hippensteel

Reprinted with permission from author: Pete Hippensteel

Pete is a retired biology professor at Trine University and Technical Vice President for SCLC (Steuben County Lakes Council)

In some situations, it takes a crisis to get people's attention. Take, for example, the large blue-green algal bloom in Lake Erie that contaminated Toledo's drinking water and closed beaches in 2014. This is not the approach the Steuben County Lakes Council wants to take. Our lakes are too valuable a recreational resource to wait until a major problem occurs before we jump into action.

This is why we continue to invest in our extensive water testing of lake inflows throughout the county. We want to detect a problem before it becomes a crisis. One such situation developed this past summer. Uniquely, this problem is in the Western Lake Erie Basin—the same watershed that has caused Lake Erie's continued algal blooms because of high nutrient inputs. This was reported in the October 8 edition of the Herald Republican. And now the search goes on to find money for restoration and to further reduce nutrient inputs in that area.

Now, here at home, our water testing has indicated significant increases in both bacteria and phosphorus levels in Fish Creek and Black Creek. It was the issuing of a CFO, confined feeding operation, permit in June 2016 that first indicated a need for expanded sampling in this area. Then, after extremely high readings in our regular May sampling, we immediately added additional testing sites in these watersheds to pinpoint the sources of these elevated levels. Also, a fly-over of this area was made to further identify potential sources. It is obvious that the number of cattle in these watersheds has increased recently. There are now large areas of bare, trampled soil that are used for supplemental feed areas, which are prone to high amounts of runoff. This runoff is located near ditches that provide direct conduits for bacteria and nutrients into Fish and Black Creeks.

The bacteria count in Fish Creek averaged 30 times higher than state standards for the four test samples taken this past summer. The Black Creek readings averaged 11 times the state standards for recreational use water. Elevated readings for phosphorus were more than twice as high as any other readings taken at all of our sampling sites for this summer. These higher phosphorus values will enhance algae and weed growth in streams and lakes.

The Lakes Council and the Hamilton Lake Association wrote a letter to the editors of the Herald Republican and the Hamilton News in August expressing our concerns. In September, we filed complaints with both the Steuben County Plan Commission and the County Health Department. The Plan Commission has indicated that there are no current zoning code violations on the cattle farm operations! The Health Department meeting was held for October 18 to address this issue.

The town of Hamilton and the lake residential areas of Hamilton Lake have invested in central sewage treatment to reduce the amounts of bacteria and nutrients entering Hamilton Lake and Fish Creek. Now these efforts are being overwhelmed by changes in land use within the Fish and Black Creek watersheds. Several types of best management practices NEED to be implemented on the farms with significantly increased cattle numbers that are beyond the normal carrying capacity of their pasture fields.

An article in the September 24 edition of the Herald Republican states that the state legislature is "looking at the environmental impact of confined feeding operations and how communities can regulate this industrial farming at the local level." Hamilton Lake needs help NOW.

We do not want this situation to develop into a crisis situation like Lake Erie's. Quick action will greatly help Hamilton Lake and also benefit Lake Erie since they are both in the same watershed. We are continuing to work to help solve this problem, which, if allowed to continue, will jeopardize the environmental health of Hamilton Lake, Black Creek and Fish Creek. Remember--Prevention, Prevention, Prevention—Not Restoration!

FINANCIAL REPORT: We received \$38,700 in LARE grants, plus the Poker Run netted \$45,000. This year we sprayed the whole lake with sonar which cost \$180,000. We approved the purchase of 8 new LIGHTED buoys this year and purchased an additional 12 LIGHTED buoys for 2018. Thanks to all the Lake homeowners for their participation in keeping Hamilton Lake the BEST.

Hamilton Lake Association

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Hamilton Lake Board Members

Ron Abraham
Janet Albright
Jan Biddle
Ginny DeBrunner
Valerie Fetters
Dennis Germann
Peggy Hayden
Clint Nester
Tonya Peters
Linda Skelly
Cathy Wagenknecht
Jim Wagenknecht

(see website for contact information)

www.hamiltonlake.org



Report on Weed Control by Clint Nester

2017 Recap – For the 2017 Season, the HLA received LARE cost-share assistance to perform their “whole lake” treatment using the Sonar One formulation of granular fluridone. To work toward longer-term control for both Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed, this treatment was performed early in the season when water temperatures were between 50 and 60 degrees F. The goal of this treatment was to potentially disrupt the formation of curly-leaf pondweed turions, the plant’s reproductive structures which form and are released to the lake bottom early in the spring. Aquatic Enhancement and Survey (HLA’s weed management contractor) performed reconnaissance on Hamilton Lake on April 21 and 24. GPS Waypoints were collected and used to mark the extent of colonization by Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed. The area of Eurasian milfoil growth was noted to be approximately 166.5 acres, while the area of curly-leaf growth was noted to be 147.75 acres. Dosing was prescribed to produce an in-lake fluridone concentration of 5 parts-per-billion (ppb). The in-lake concentration was to then be maintained from 2-4 ppb for a period of at least 84 days. The application was performed April 25, providing control of both target plants for the duration of the 2017 summer season. Lake-water samples (assays) were collected on the 21, 35, 49, 62, 84, and 125 days after treatment (DAT). Results showed that the lake contained an average concentration of 3 ppb at 21 DAT peaking at 3.6 ppb 49 DAT and falling to 2.7 ppb 125 DAT.

2018 Outlook- For 2018, it is recommended that the HLA apply for cost-share funding to perform curly-leaf pondweed control on up to 316 acres to commence in the early-season as water temperatures approach 50° F (warming trend) and are not higher than 60° F. Based on past fluridone results, it is expected that a very small amount of Eurasian watermilfoil growth may be observed at Hamilton Lake in 2018 so it is recommended that it be treated (up to 5 acres). It is also advised that a plan update be performed in 2018 including a Tier II plant survey. Maximum total costs in 2018 are expected to be approximately \$120,000. As stated above, the HLA is working hard to obtain long-term proactive treatment results, rather than addressing non-native invasive plants repeatedly each season as they emerge. Treating early in the season, before turions have developed and achieved viability disrupts this process, thereby preventing turion production and causing a depletion of turions. It has been demonstrated in other lakes that several years of this practice can deplete turions enough to reduce curly-leaf populations to the point where no treatment is necessary for a number of years. While there is the hope that taking a pro-active approach will reduce weed pressure in the future, we must also know that this is not a proven approach and comes with a high cost. The HLA has been working hard to raise funds to cover such an approach but will undoubtedly need continued support from the Hamilton Lake community.

The HLA is hopeful for a beautiful summer with low weed pressure on the lake. However, each year is different and always offers up a few challenges. HLA will continue to diligently monitor the lake and treat the invasive weeds as our budget allows. Please do your part by 1) keeping nutrients out of the lake. Grass clippings, leaves, and fertilizers that enter the lake all contribute to aquatic vegetation growth in Hamilton Lake. 2) support the Poker Run, HLA sticker campaign, raffles, and 3) if you have not paid for weed spray, please consider doing so this year and in the years ahead.

Did you know that only 75% of the Hamilton Lake residents pay their dues?

In order to keep our Lake beautiful, and keep our Town strong, we need this participation rate to increase and eventually become 100%. While the lake looks great, the weeds never rest, and so neither can we on our efforts to raise funding! If you are not a member, please fill out the membership form and send your dues in today. If you are already a member, thank you for your continued support!

The Hamilton Lake Association