

# LAKE GOGEBIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

"SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE  
"FOR THE WELFARE OF THE ENTIRE LAKE"

Editor of LGIA Newsletter—Phil Wirtanen

Publisher—Jim O'Neill

## From The President's Desk



August 2019  
Volume XIV Issue 2

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Each year the Board of the LGIA considers projects and programs for the Association to participate in. As you've read in many previous Newsletters we've worked on a good number of these in recent years. I won't recount them here but suffice to recognize that the great share of them have clearly supported our primary mission of caring for the well-being of Lake Gogebic.

Currently we are working on our annual ongoing projects of boat washing and fish crib placements. However we do not have any special project currently going on. At our annual meeting and picnic we asked folks for ideas and now we are asking you the same. The LGIA is your Association and we welcome your suggestions for things that we all can be doing for Lake Gogebic.

Over the years I've become aware that many lake associations have substantial programs for the care of their respective lakes. Many of these efforts are going on to solve or correct problems rather than to prevent them. Rampant invasive incursion, industrial or agricultural pollution, chemical toxicity, etc. are quite common. None of these things are issues with us.....yet. Our efforts are more of the protective type aimed at keeping our lake in its pristine condition.

Some time ago the LGIA Board became aware of a number of programs that place an emphasis on shoreline protection. In discussion about these one question kept coming up; will the property owners on Lake Gogebic welcome or reject such an effort?

On the one hand most everyone would agree that protection of shoreline is a logical and important part of caring for our lake. On the other hand people are reluctant to participate in any program that demands or even suggests how they ought to deal with their property. The challenge always is to find a way to show folks how certain actions are good for them. They need to see the advantage of taking a certain action. If they can't see that, acceptance, much less enthusiasm, can't be expected.

As an example of things it is widely known amongst biologists and water ecology experts that fertilizers with phosphate content leaching into lake waters is a primary trigger for the growth of noxious algae. This algae growth is an extreme threat to the health of a lake. It seems reasonable that people who are concerned about such things would welcome an effort to inform and educate property owners about such a threat, only one among many that threaten a lake's well-being.

Our challenge is to find some way to engage people in a positive way to encourage their support and cooperation. There is a well developed program called "Score the Shore" that we have considered conducting. Basically, it is an assessment of the entire shoreline of the lake identifying both strengths and challenges. A primary emphasis in the approach is positive guidance to anybody who is interested in improving their shoreline. One idea is to identify native plants that can be planted to create a natural barrier to runoff into the lake. There are numerous other elements embedded in the "Score the Shore" that lend themselves to helping the lake.

A real task is to find a way to fire up people's interest and willingness to participate and/or support such programs. So very often it seems as if writing things in these Newsletters is somewhat like preaching to the choir. As with so many other things increasing our membership would help considerably to spread understanding and involvement. So we'll add another plea for you to encourage your neighbors and friends, if not now members, to join the LGIA.

Enjoy the rest of the summer. We have had some absolutely beautiful days so far. Which begs me to observe that the U. P. would be perfect if it were not for the bugs....

**L.G.I.A. ANNUAL MEETING AND PICNIC**  
July 21, 2019 – Gogebic County Park – Noon CDT

**Meeting Minutes**

President Wirtanen called the LGIA Annual Meeting to order at 1:20pm CDT, welcoming the members and thanking them for coming. He also thanked all the members that set up the picnic and all their hard work.

Membership was informed of the projects dealing with aquatic invasive species and how they can help. Unfortunately, funding from the DNR for this year's project was not approved. Possible explanation for this was that the monies that were available were needed for another project. He went on to explain that our lake does not have some of the very quick growing invasive species that other lakes are fighting.

Discussion regarding how to attract new members for the association and suggestions for recruiting were given from some of the membership. President Wirtanen also said that there is one position to fill on the LGIA board for the upcoming season but there are no volunteers at this time. He also asked the membership to look to their neighbors who might not be members and see if they can suggest membership in LGIA.

Member Donna Stuczynski volunteered to work on the canvas committee for LGIA to recruit members. Ms. Jean Ninefeldt said that she would assist her in getting additional members to help. President Wirtanen thanked them for their assistance in this endeavor.

The 50/50 was lucky winner of the day was Betty Lou Wirtanen who won the prize of \$88.00.

Drawing for door prizes was the next order of business. Thanks to member Kathy Lowery for gathering seventeen door prizes, awarded as follows:

Gogebic Range Bank – 2 goody bags  
Char's Restaurant – Two \$10.00 Gift Certificates & Two Tee Shirts  
Antonio's Restaurant - \$20.00 Gift Certificate  
Earla's Restaurant – Two \$20.00 Gift Certificates  
Big Valley Car Dealership – One Oil Change Gift Certificate  
Brite Spot Liquor Store – Two Large Subs Gift Certificate  
Super One Grocery - \$25.00 Gift Certificate  
Dairy Queen, Bessemer – Two \$10.00 Gift Certificates  
Ewen Lumber Co. – LED Humming Bird Feeder  
Lake Gogebic Fireflies – One Gift Basket which included 2 tickets for the annual chicken dinner  
Gogebic Grocery – One Koozie  
Chris Wirtanen – One fish painting & one fish model

President Wirtanen adjourned the meeting at 2:20pm

**The Board of Directors and all of the members of the LGIA extend a special "thank you" for the generosity of the vendors who provided door prizes: GOGEBIC RANGE BANK; CHAR'S RESTAURANT; ANTONIO'S RESTAURANT; EARLA'S RESTAURANT; BIG VALLEY AUTO DEALERSHIP; BRITE SPOT LIQUORS; SUPER ONE GROCERY; DAIRY QUEEN, BESSEMER; EWEN BULDING SUPPLY; LAKE GOGEBIC FIREFLIES; LAKE GOGEBIC OUTPOST; CHRIS WIRTANEN**

**2019 LGIA FALL GATHERING**

***MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!* Thursday, October 3, 2019**

This year the dinner will be at the **GOGEBIC LODGE**. Happy hour (**cash bar**) with **APPETIZERS** begins at 5P.M. **CDT. BUFFET STYLE DINNER** begins at 6P.M.

Dinner includes: Salad Bar; CHICKEN, BAKED FISH, ROAST PORT, MASHED POTATOES & GRAVY, ROLLS AND DESSERT. COFFE AND TEA INCLUDED. The cost is **\$14.95 PER PERSON (Cash or check made payable to Gogebic Lodge)**. Appetizers, tip and taxes will be paid by the LGIA.

**PLEASE RSVP BY THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup> TO KATHY BROWN, 715-661-0015 OR VIA EMAIL TO [hannieboobo2002@gmail.com](mailto:hannieboobo2002@gmail.com). Everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there!**

LAKE GOGEBIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING  
July 25, 2019  
MINUTES

President Phil Wirtanen called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. CDT at the Bergland Fire Hall.

**Attendance:** (Board Members): Phil Wirtanen, Jim O'Neill, , Kathy Lowery, Mark Brown, , Mike Burt, Ralph Wirtanen, Steve Salmi, Jean Ninfeldt, Carol D'Alberto, John Matonich, Past President Bob D'Alberto

**Absent:** Chris Wirtanen, Ken Carlson, Jim Vigness, Glenn Korpi

Minutes from the June 2019 Board Meeting and Annual Meeting of July 21, 2019 were previously distributed via email. A motion to accept the reports as written was made, seconded and approved.

**Treasurer Report:** The June 30, 2019 report was previously distributed via email. Current balances are as follows: General Account \$4,819.35; Special Account \$480.82; CD Account \$7,846.86. A motion to accept the report as presented was made, seconded and approved.

Newly elected board member, John Matonich was introduced.

**Election of Officers:** A motion was made (electronically) to elect officers of the Board and Committee Chairs for the year 2019-2020 by Jim O'Neill as follows:

President - Phil Wirtanen  
Vice President - Chris Wirtanen  
Treasurer - Jim O'Neill  
Secretary - Ken Carlson

Committee Chairs:

Membership - Carol D'Alberto  
AIS/Boat Washing - Kathy Lowery  
Fish Cribs - Mike Burt  
Adopt A Highway - Jim Vigness  
Lake Level/CLMP - Mark Brown  
Social - Kathy Brown  
WEPIC - Chris Wirtanen  
WUPCAC - Phil Wirtanen  
Special Projects - Phil Wirtanen

This motion was seconded by Carol D'Alberto and carried unanimously as proposed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Membership:** Carol D'Alberto – Dues reminders have been sent out. Carol has all addresses for lake properties now and has organized them into quadrants to be used for door to door membership soliciting. All current members have been removed from the lists. She has also contacted the local real estate agents who have agreed to present a one year complimentary membership to all new residents that they serve. She has about 500 applications in stock. She suggests that all of the campgrounds be canvassed as well.

**Lake Level and CLMP:** Mark Brown reported that there are no outflow deviations from FERC allowances. Lake clarity is averaging 8' to 8.5'.

**Swimmer's Itch:** Phil commented that the LGIA is a member of the Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership. Assessing the issue is an expensive, cost sharing, proposition. The question raised was what, if anything, should the LGIA do relative to this issue? Apparently Bergland TWP is doing some kind of testing but we don't know the nature of the testing and the results. John Matonich will follow up on this question. John also voiced a concern that identifying an issue for which we have no solution might create a larger problem. The issue will be discussed again at our August meeting.

**Fish Cribs:** Mike Burt reported that Wendy McDonough wants the LGIA to have the launch pontoon. Mike will store it on his property. Phil and Bob D'Alberto will visit with Wendy to make arrangements and to get any records that she has regarding locations and requests for placement. Mark Brown will assist Mike in positioning the cribs.

**Social Committee:** Kathy Brown will take over as Chair of this committee. Kathy Lowery and Jean Ninfeldt are the other members. The next event will be the fall dinner. A vote was taken as to location. Gogebic Lodge was the unanimous choice. No date has been set yet.

**WEPIC:** Nothing to report.

**Boat Washing:** Kathy Lowery reported that the program is continuing as planned. The Landing Blitz went well despite the timing (mid-week) and less than great weather.

**Special Projects:** Because there is no funding for purple loosestrife this year, the question was raised as to whether the LGIA should continue remediation efforts. Kathy Lowery recommended that we deploy the beetles if we can acquire them. Ralph Wirtanen suggested that we monitor in order to determine the need to remove.

**Adopt A Highway:** Jim Vigness has is planning to carry out the fall cleanup.

**WUPCAC:** Phil Wirtanen – Information on the last meeting will be covered in the forthcoming newsletter. Phil was re-elected as chairman.

**Old Business:** Previously discussed in Committee reports.

**Newsletter:** Articles for the July-August newsletter were solicited. A suggestion was made to include a membership application form in the newsletter. That suggestion will be adopted.

**New Business:**

**Fish Crib funding:** A motion was made and approved to continue to place 10 cribs per year and to earmark \$500.00 of LGIA funds per year for construction.

The next meeting will be on August 22, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m., CDT

Respectfully submitted by

Jim O'Neill, Treasurer

**NUMBERS TO KNOW**

BERGLAND TWP OFFICE: 906-575-3522

MARENISCO TWP OFFICE: 906-787-2463

MARENISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT: 906-787-2300

LAKE GOGEBIC FIRE DEPARTMENT:

906-842-3555

**AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION**

Kathy Lowery, AIS Coordinator

At the LGIA picnic, I was approached by Tina Dale, a member who was concerned that she had discovered Eurasian Water Milfoil near her north shore dock. I explained that while I didn't think it was that particular milfoil, I would be able to collect a sample and take it to the US Forest Service for analysis. The next week, she was able to collect it and I took it to Ian Shackleford, a biologist. He was able to help me determine with the naked eye that it was not Eurasian Milfoil. The LGIA is here to help you identify and advise on aquatic and terrestrial invasives on our lake. I can be contacted by phone at 906-842-3638, email at [moxiepot@live.com](mailto:moxiepot@live.com) or our Facebook page, Protecting Lake Gogebic.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT****CAROL D'ALBERTO, CHAIR**

The Lake Gogebic Improvement Association members are the lifeblood of our organization. Membership in our organization, or any other of the many organizations that our members belong to, are the fibers of organizations. Membership is all of our responsibility.

All around our lake and in our surrounding community we have new people moving into our area and those that have to move from this beautiful area for many life reasons. New neighbors are sometimes so busy getting settled that they might just welcome you stopping by with a baked treat or just a smile on your face and introduce yourself. Get to know them and at one of our next functions invite them to come and meet the community.

That is what happened at the membership picnic last month. We had a new couple that happened to see our poster about the picnic and they came to see who and what we were all about. They are now new members of L.G.I.A.

Welcome new members Carol and Russ Tresedder, Tina Dale and Dr. James Rocco.

We ask you help to spread the word about the great things L.G.I. A. does to continue to keep the lake pristine for all the people that live on Lake Gogebic and all of those that come to use our beautiful area. In this way it will help to keep our organization strong. Have you heard those beautiful songs the "loons" are singing all summer? One of the great projects of the LGIA is the "loon nests". Jack Kurtz and his group have done great job with that project. The additional projects are the placement of fish cribs, monitoring the lake level and testing for water quality.

We have our fall October Fest coming up soon. Our social committee is now working on date, time and place. More information to follow in the near future. What a great time to bring those new people to an L.G.I.A. event and have them meet others.

If you have any membership questions, I am happy to help or if you would like me to call someone that you think might be interested in joining, send me their info and I would be happy to forward them our current newsletter and also a membership brochure.

Take care, enjoy the rest of summer and I am sure a beautiful fall. Hope to see you at the October Fest!



## Benefits to Michigan's Fish Species in Relation to Natural Shorelines

by Brett Riser, Aquatic Biologist, Calhoun Conservation District and Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership Educator

Natural shorelines are not only visually appealing but directly benefit many fish species in Michigan. Michigan has more than 11,000 lakes, tens of thousands miles of rivers and streams and 43 percent of the Great Lakes waters within its borders. Within this vast resource live many fish species that are important to our recreational fisheries. Recreational fisheries are a huge economic engine for the state and provide the largest and highest-value use of Michigan's aquatic resources as documented in the recently released U.S. Fish and Wildlife report (2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation) and the Department of Natural Resources 2013-2017 Fisheries Division Strategic Plan, "Charting the Course: Fisheries Division's Framework for Managing Aquatic Resources". In addition to the economic benefits of our fisheries, fish populations are often one of several indicators that determine the aquatic health of our water systems.

Critical littoral habitat, riparian habitat, and ecosystem function are altered as a result of shoreline residential development (Engel & Pederson 1998; Francis & Shindler 2009) and many of Michigan's shorelines have been altered as a result of residential development. Landowners often clear large trees and remove dead trees from the water. Fallen trees in littoral zones, can serve as important refuge for fish (Roth et al. 2007) and complex littoral vegetation comprised of emergent, submerged and free-floating macrophytes (aquatic plants) along the shoreline provide structural complexity that mediates predator-prey interactions by providing refuge for small fishes (Sass et al. 2006).

Michigan's sunfish species belonging to the family Centrachidae are extremely important to inland fisheries in Michigan and very popular with anglers. The sunfish species are significantly impacted by shoreline development – or the removal of natural shorelines. There are 12 species of Centrachidae in the state and of these: bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), redear sun fish (*Lepomis microlophus*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), and black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*) are examples of species of significant importance to Michigan's sport fishery that are negatively impacted from shoreline development. These species are abundant in many Michigan lakes and rivers providing residents and visitors many successful angling opportunities.

Effects of development on shorelines extend into the water body itself, and may lead to large shifts in fish communities (Roth et al. 2007). Within developed lakes, black crappie nest adjacent to undeveloped sections of shoreline and associate with macrophytes which are less abundant in developed shorelines (Reed & Pereira 2009). The same trend has been identified for largemouth bass (Scheuerell & Shindler 2004) and bluegill growth rates negatively correlate with shoreline development (Schindler et al. 2000). Largemouth bass in highly developed lakes take longer to enter the fishery and may reach trophy lengths more rapidly in undeveloped systems (Gaeta et al. 2010). Natural shorelines containing vegetation provide needed habitat for the reproduction and survival of these fish species and result in larger fish produced faster within these natural shoreline systems.

These studies indicate an adverse trend in shoreline residential development and its effects on fish communities, especially the Centrachidae (sunfish) family, in Michigan's lakes and streams. These consequences can be hard to observe over time; and for the riparian landowner to witness how residential development of a shoreline can ultimately negatively affect the ecology of many fish communities is a challenge.

We have observed how natural shorelines benefit many species of wildlife and help to reduce soil erosion along our rivers and lakes. The benefits of natural shorelines extend well into surface waters where this highly desired habitat is extremely valuable, and depended upon, by many of Michigan's fish species

### Lake Levels of Lake Gogebic and a Cautionary Tale Wilbur Hurst, August, 2019

Lake Gogebic water levels are set by the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee (FERC), since the water discharged from the lake at the dam near Bergland eventually reaches the electric power dam at Victoria. FERC regulates the water supply for all power dams in the country. As a result, the water level of Lake Gogebic is supposed to be maintained between a defined maximum and minimum height. This note relates the experiences of the Heathcock family when the water level of Lake Gogebic was significantly increased.

My grandfather, John Heathcock, acquired in 1910 a property with 50 feet of lakefront on the west shore of the lake just north of the Ontonagon County Park. For a period of between 5 to 10 years or so (exact date lost to family members) the family camped in a wall tent on their property. The lake supplied water for doing dishes, laundry and taking a bath, besides the usual recreational swimming and of course fishing. Like much of the lake today, the property was fronted by a clay bank (we estimate about 2 to 3 feet in height from some photographic comparisons) and at the bottom of the bank was a small strip of sand. The sand bottom continued out into the swimming area, in most instances free of any rock. In this way, it was comparable to the present-day beach at the Ontonagon County Park, which also has a sandy bottom but no clay bank in the swimming area. (The park is relatively new – up through the 1940's and 50's, the park did not exist and a two-track driveway lead from M64 to the beach. A common practice was to drive your car to the beach and, using buckets of lake water, wash your car clean of the debris from the gravel road that was M64.)

In those early days of 1910 or so, lakefront owners whose homes were in the various towns along the Gogebic iron range would get to the lake by train, debarking at the Korelock train depot on the north side of the lake. Like many, the Heathcocks reached their property either by walking the shore line or by a row boat of some sort. Sometime around 1905 to 1910, John Heathcock acquired a steel launch, equipped with flotation tanks in case of swamping (which they did once on Lake Gogebic) and a one-cylinder Detroit engine, that he kept on Sunday Lake in Wakefield. Around 1915, he had the launch loaded onto a railroad flat car and brought to Lake Gogebic. Among other things, this allowed them to easily make trips to the dock at Bergland and there they bought groceries and kerosene for the stove that was in their wall tent. The lake by then had a dam, but the purpose of the dam was to increase the lake level for floating logs to the Bergland saw mill. In comparison to today, the lake level was quite low. In fact, it was routine for most trips with the launch from the Heathcock property to Bergland that at places in Bergland Bay it was necessary to get out of the boat and push it across slightly submerged sand bars.

That was the situation until sometime I think most likely around 1920 (this date is as best I can estimate, but most likely is at least before 1930 – at the moment I do not have any record of the date). In any case, it was at that time that the Bergland dam was changed to greatly increase the lake level. By then, the Heathcocks had built a cabin on their property. No notice of this change in lake level was received by the Heathcocks (or others that we know of). Also, it occurred at a time when the Heathcocks were not coming regularly to the lake, probably for several months or so. It was therefore a great surprise to them when they did come to see not only the increase of the lake level, but that 25 feet of their property had been washed away by the action of the waves (and of course, their house now stood that much closer to the lake). The bank in this area contains a lot of clay, and it is easily solubilized by the water. All of that clay was now on the lake bottom, a lot of it in swimming depths that now too had moved closer to the cabin. My aunt recalls going swimming for the first time, and her feet sinking into the muck of the clay above her ankle. In addition, encased in the clay of course was lots of rock and stone, and that was now on the lake bottom all over the area once occupied by the land. Today, it may be that the position of the land washed away by the lake can be estimated by the region of the lake from the shore outward where many rocks are strewn over the bottom. Beyond this region, then once again not nearly as many rocks are found. Eventually, as my aunt explained it, in the span of a couple of decades the sand worked its way up enough through the muck to provide a hard bottom, but the many rocks remain. In addition to the bank erosion caused by the lake water, there was that of erosion from rain. Many of the homeowners spent time moving rock out of the lake and placing them into the side of the bank in order to stabilize it. (I once had a picture of my mother throwing rocks up to the bank, where my grandfather was placing them carefully. Interestingly, behind her and below the bank and at water level stood a tree (trunk size maybe 4 inches) that was now several inches under water. That tree must have originally been growing on the beach above the water line but below the original bank. Unfortunately, I cannot now locate the picture.) Of course, it can be expected that the ice also would have moved some of the rock up to and even into the bank, over time. Most likely the sandy beach that is at the park remains largely stone-free since there is no appreciable bank at the shore line and the copious amounts of sand there can accommodate the water level change.

## WUP-CAC Report

Phil Wirtanen

The State of Michigan places great value on its natural resources. If there is anything that gives the Upper Peninsula any political clout it generally has to do with an issue of natural resource; deer, forests, fish, trails, etc. Though we represent over 30% of the landmass we only have 3% of the population. The harsh reality is that neither deer nor trees vote and in politics population numbers rule. So there has always been a lot of emphasis and involvement from UP politicians on legislative issues regarding natural resources issues since this is an area in which they might have more influence. Their legislative committee assignments generally reflect this.

As mentioned in earlier reports the resolutions and recommendations generated by the Western Upper Peninsula Citizens Advisory Council (WUPCAC) go directly to the Director of the DNR rather than legislators. However, there is no question that our actions are recognized by them. Often they will be in attendance at one of our bi-monthly meetings. Frequently they will join in the public comment portion of the agenda to offer their comments and insights. Their presence and participation, as well as that of NRC members, is indicative of the belief that the CAC meetings are a significant public forum.

As you are aware the makeup of the CACs is that 20 members of the public are appointed to a Council from a wide range of natural resources related interests. There are an Eastern and a Western UP Council. We present a citizen's perspective to the DNR and our deliberations and debates will lead to resolutions asking the Director of the DNR to take certain actions. Though the formal avenue of influence is within the DNR it is quite apparent that it extends beyond that. Heightened awareness by legislators, NRC Commissioners, leaders in sports associations and members of the general public is accomplished by exposure to the issues raised at CAC meetings.

These advisory councils are a great example of the mechanisms you have as a means for learning, relating and contributing to the process. The LGIA has had presence and voice on the WUPCAC for the last 11 years. Our voice is heard.

These are public meetings and the schedule for them, as well as the agendas and minutes, are available on the website; [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr). The next meeting is a joint meeting of the WUPCAC and EUPCAC in conjunction with a meeting of the NRC held in Marquette on September 11, 2019 at 3:00 EDT. Join us.

**For several years now the Marenisco Township office staff has supported the LGIA by allowing us to use their automated copy machine to run copies of the newsletter. Of course, the machine is not fully automated and we rely on the able assistance of the office manager to actually get the letter loaded and the machine properly prepared to do the 100 collated copies. We proffer our sincere thanks to the Township and staff for this continuing support.**

## LAKE GOGEBIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box #75  
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August 2019  
Volume XIV Issue 2



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### L.G.I.A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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