

The Hutchins Lake Herald

A publication of
Hutchins Lake Improvement Association
www.hlia.org

Hutchins Lake is what we all have in common.

Edition #23

Winter 2012



HLIA Membership Directory

Last summer, HLIA area representatives delivered the updated HLIA Membership Directory to all current association members. This hard copy directory includes the names, email addresses and phone numbers of HLIA members. The directory also lists HLIA officers and area representatives on page 1.

Please note the following changes to the list of area representatives.

Peg McNamara, District 7 269-330-0066

Richard Schmidt, District 9B 269-561-5604
rk_schmidt@comcast.net

If you are a current member, and did not receive your 2011 Membership Directory, please contact HLIA president Bob Renzema at 269-561-5375.

HLIA Membership Dues

HLIA would like to thank all association members for their past support. We would like to welcome new members also. To renew your HLIA membership for 2012, or to join for the first time, please:

- Write a check for \$20.00 payable to HLIA.
- Complete the enclosed payment form.
- Send the completed payment form and check to:

Gary Holton, Treasurer, HLIA
2219 Blue Goose Drive
Fennville, MI 49408

With your membership in HLIA, you will receive:

- Twice yearly newsletter
- An updated HLIA Membership Directory
- Opportunity to vote at the HLIA annual meeting

In addition, your membership helps HLIA sponsor:

- A free summer discovery day camp for kids
- Summer social activities
- Boater safety classes and certification

Water Quality of Hutchins Lake

Last August, Bob Renzema, HLIA president, worked with Applied Analytical of Grand Rapids to collect water samples used in an **analysis of Hutchins Lake water quality**. Applied Analytical, a testing lab and consulting service, has been testing and analyzing Hutchins Lake water quality for about 20 years.

The team collected **water samples at a total of 15 different sites**. Most of the shoreline samples were from points at or near drainpipes entering the lake. Central basin samples were taken at the surface and at depths of 10, 20 and 30 feet. Sampling points were the same as those used during 2009 sampling.

Sample analysis showed that **nitrate-nitrogen concentrations in the lake were higher than they have been since 1984**.

The concern is that nitrates serve as nutrient sources for vegetation growth in the lake, that is, they spur the growth of weeds in the lake.

Applied Analytical's analysis also detected the **presence of coliforms, including E. coli, in most of the water samples**. E. coli has been detected in lake water samples in many previous years.

According to AA, the high nitrate concentrations and E. coli presence probably were **a result of high volumes of rainfall during the spring and summer of 2011**. Ground around the lake became saturated, inhibiting optimum performance of surrounding septic systems. This caused nitrates and untreated bacteria to flow into the lake.

Keith Heemskerk of AA notes that water samples were taken late in August. This time period was near the end of **the season for highest septic systems use around the lake**. According to Heemskerk, water samples taken from similar points in late September may well have shown lower nitrate concentrations or E. coli presence.

Heemskerk says the results of the report **do not** mean the lake is unsafe for swimming or fishing. However, it will be important to monitor trends in nitrate levels and E. coli presence over the next several years.

The AA report also emphasized that **inspection and maintenance of lake members' septic systems are highly recommended**.

Do You Have Septic Problems?

- Are your toilet, sinks or drains flushing slowly?
- Do you see visible liquid on the surface of the ground near your septic system?
- Does lush green grass grow in the area of your septic system, even during dry weather?
- Do you see a build-up of aquatic weeds or algae in the lake adjacent to your home? This may indicate the septic system waste is leaching into the surface water
- Do you notice unpleasant odors around your house?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, contact a licensed septic systems operator or the **Allegan County Health Department, 269-673-5415**, for help in assessing the situation.

Septic System Do's and Don'ts

HLIA area representative Bill Busscher is owner of Septic Tank Systems Co. in Fennville. Bill recommends the following list of septic system Do's and Don'ts from the Macatawa Watershed Project of the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council. Bill also supports the Project's list of septic problem questions on the previous page. See www.the-mac.org

Do:

- Learn the location of your septic tank and drain field.
- Connect laundry and kitchen water to the septic tank.
- Divert other sources of water such as roof drains and sump pumps to areas away from the septic system. Excessive water keeps soil in the drain field saturated, which prevents adequate treatment of wastewater.
- Use bleach, disinfectants and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly.

Do have your septic tank pumped out by a licensed operator every two to three years.

Don't:

- Allow heavy vehicles to drive over or park on top of the septic system.
- Cover the drain field with a hard cover such as concrete or asphalt. The drain field should have a grass cover.
- Plant trees or shrubs on, or directly adjacent to, the septic tank and drain field. Their roots could damage your septic system.

Don't:

- Use a garbage disposal. Large quantities of solids shorten the life span of a septic system.
- Use commercial septic tank additives. They don't help and may harm your system over time.
- Pour left-over hazardous household chemicals down your drains or toilets.

New Michigan Law for Personal Water Craft

A new Michigan law has raised the ages for operating Personal Water Craft (PWC). According to John Lindahl, HLIA secretary, the new law raises ***the minimum age for operating a PWC solo to 16***, and raises the ***minimum age for operating a PWC with an adult supervisor on board to 14***.

Aerial Lake Photograph

The beautiful aerial photograph of Hutchins Lake is available once again. To order your copy, contact Gary Holton at 269-561-2064 or at sknapp@i2k.com. The cost of the 20" x 24" photo is \$63.00.

Lou Sytsma, who dedicated his energies and talents to HLIA and Hutchins Lake for many years, passed away this fall. HLIA extends its deepest sympathy to the Sytsma family.

Hutchins Lake Water Clarity 2011

John Lindahl, HLIA secretary, conducted weekly tests on lake water clarity from May through September. John reports that in May the water was clear to a depth of 22 ½ feet, the greatest depth of water clarity ever recorded. By mid-July the water was clear to a depth of only 8 feet.

Upcoming Events!

Watch www.HLIA.org and the 2012 Spring Summer HLIA newsletter for complete information on these upcoming summer events:

- ❖ Memorial Day Weekend Poker Run
- ❖ HLIA Annual Meeting
- ❖ Boating Safety Class
- ❖ HLIA Discovery Day Camp 2012

Discovery Day Camp 2011

Ten children, ages 6 to 13, and two grandmothers attended HLIA's Discovery Day Camp 2011.

On the two hottest days of the summer, the campers participated in "Finding Elements of Art in Nature". The campers took an observation walk and completed three art projects. They also accompanied John Lindahl on his pontoon boat to test for lake water clarity and enjoyed a potluck picnic at Ralph and Mary Anne McMahan's waterfront home.

HLIA area representatives Eleanor Clough, a former art teacher, and Suzanne Holton were instructors.

Hutchins Lake Improvement Association

Bob Renzema, President
5988 Eagle Point Dr.
Fennville, MI 49408