

PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 272
HONOR, MICHIGAN 49640-0272
www.platte-lake.org
April 29, 2004

Dear PLIA Member:

Greetings from Platte Lake. The ice has gone and we are looking forward to another great spring and summer at Platte Lake. A lot has happened since the November 2003 newsletter and we have information that we would like to share.

Platte lake appears to be in great shape following a marked reduction in hatchery discharge since last year's construction mishap that allowed approximately 60 lbs of phosphorus to be discharged in two days. The last sample under the ice indicated a phosphorus concentration of 5.25 ug/l and the latest April 7, 2004 data indicates 6.11 ug/l. These are great numbers and where we "want to be" starting the year. Hatchery discharge has been extremely low with only 12.64 lbs of phosphorus being discharged in the first three months of the year! The new hatchery renovations are working as it relates to lower phosphorus discharge and a resulting cleaner Platte Lake.

We continue to have daily contact with the DNR via e-mail as well as bi-weekly phone conferences between Gary Whelan, DNR State Fish Production Manager, Dr. Raymond Canale, Settlement Agreement Implementation coordinator and myself. I must say that what has been accomplished on all fronts has been nothing short of noteworthy. The cooperation from the DNR continues to be a source of great satisfaction. The hatchery discharge limit for the "construction period" was 250 lb P/yr. The DNR came in at 168.7 lb P last year. If they had not had the construction accident we spoke of in detail in the November newsletter, the number would have been even lower. The hatchery will transition to a "three year test" period starting June 30, 2004, where the discharge limit will 225 lb P/yr. After that follows the "five year compliance" period where the discharge is limit is 175 lb P/yr. I must also add that they had an "incident" with a process water pump controller and related alarm system this spring that resulted in a loss of approximately 50 % of their coho production. They have taken detailed steps to ensure that that particular sequence of events will not happen again. The bottom line is that the hatchery under the management of Gary Whelan continues to be committed to having the discharge from the upstream Platte River State Fish Hatchery as low as possible. This is a plus for Platte Lake.

As it relates to Platte Lake foam, Dr. Scott McNaught of Central Michigan University has analyzed Platte Lake algae populations for all of 2003 and it is his opinion that the foam was the result of the oils released from the decomposition of diatoms after the August 2003 algal bloom that was precipitated by the phosphorus release from the hatchery construction incident. Others in the field believe the foam may also have something to do with the increase in zebra mussel population that caused the algal population to shift from the sinking to the floating algae species, blue-greens that the zebra mussels cannot get to and by many accounts do not like to eat if they do. I will add that foam was unusually heavy last year on other area lakes and the link was zebra mussels. Platte Lake had not only zebra mussels but the one-time slug of phosphorus. We have noticed some foam this spring, but nowhere near the magnitude of what we experienced last summer and fall. It is my opinion that if we keep the phosphorus out, the algae will not flourish and the source of the foam will not be there. This spring and summer will be the test for all to see.

Dr. McNaught's paper, as well as the latest Platte Lake side scan sonar depth maps, underwater plant location maps, our "Platte Lake Case Study" paper that will be presented at the July 15, 2004, International Water Environment Federation conference in Dearborn, Michigan, and many other new articles, etc. are on our web page www.platte-lake.org. The web site will be updated with new information as soon as we receive it. Our many thanks to Board Member Michael Pattison for his efforts on the web site.

A few words about the Association and membership. We now have 350 households as members, a large gain from previous years. This means that about 200 of your neighbors on the lake are not members and are not reading this newsletter as well as all the other educational information we send out about caring for our lake. Please do what you can to sign these people up. If you know of anyone who is not a member, stress to them the importance of being informed. Each of you needs to be an educator. Now that the hatchery is in compliance, the ball is in our collective court for lake improvement, and we must all use the best management practices for shoreline dwellers. You've received numerous mailings and brochures on these; make sure everyone around you is doing the same. The Platte River Watershed Project has a full-bore education and outreach program going through the Benzie Conservation District under the direction of Jenee Rowe and you'll be seeing more of their material. Watch for the "Platte River Watershed" signs as you drive the roads this summer. The PLIA played a large role in getting this done. If you would be willing to be called for a work bee sometime this summer for a day of installing the signs, please contact Jerry Heiman at 882-5692 or e-mail at bmh@benzie.com. Jenee is also working on a demonstration project at a residence on Platte Lake showing ideal shoreline conversion to buffer strip using native plantings. You'll see information on this when it's done.

We have a priority list of lake improvement projects under discussion with the DNR to be funded by the penalty money we have received as part of the Settlement Agreement. The completion of the Deadstream dam fish passage was the first. Hopefully the northern pike found it to their liking this spring. Coming projects include identification and re-planting wild rice, bulrushes and other once native wild plants in the lake, netting out/removing gar pike in cooperation with the DNR to make way for the northern pike population to re-establish itself, fish habitat structures, etc. If you are willing to help with the gar pike netting when the DNR schedules this summer, please contact Jerry Heiman (above) or Wil Swiecki (below).

We will be receiving our annual plant of 100,00 northern pike fry put in above the Deadstream dam the week of May 10. Development at the Wolf Lake Hatchery was slow this year so they won't be ready until then. 63,000 walleye fingerlings will be planted in June by the DNR also. This is the 3rd year of the planned 3 year walleye planting project. The DNR will then do an "index survey" this fall, skip '05 and '06, then repeat walleye plants starting in '07.

I would like to personally thank all those involved for all their time and direct effort and I want to thank the membership at large for all their continued support! Special thanks to Jim Berridge for all his work on the data base!

What can you do? Send in your dues and any contributions you can afford. We are an IRS 501c3 organization and all contributions are fully tax deductible.

Also, please feel free to call me, write or e-mail with any questions, comments or concerns at any time. You are our eyes and ears and if you see, hear or read about something that raises a concern in your mind, please pass it along to ensure that I and the PLIA Board are also aware. Downstate: 248-553-3110, Lake: 231-325-2046, e-mail: wswiecki@twmi.rr.com

Thanks,

Wilfred Swiecki
President, PLIA