

**PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**

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April 17, 2009

Greetings from Platte Lake:

The ice is off and we are on our way to another wonderful year on Platte Lake!

It was a very cold and snowy winter. More like the Michigan winters of the late fifties and early sixties. We experienced some mid-winter thaws and what appeared to be a significant number of sunny days that contributed to the early ice melt. Please take a few moments and let us bring you up to speed on what has happened over the winter.

The lake appears to be fine, see attached secchi depth readings. The DNR observed a 16 ft secchi depth April 9, 2009. The Hatchery has had some non-compliances over the past year. We still meet bi-weekly with the DNR and Dr. Canale and are on top of things. The Hatchery exceeded their three month cumulative discharge in April 2008. It was 60.77 lbs P versus the Court ordered 55 lbs P. I must state we have been working for many years on fine tuning the details of the basic methodology for discharge monitoring and are nearing a consensus based on significant experimentation on monitoring techniques.

The 2008 non-compliance resulted in a penalty of \$2500.00 and the five year compliance period restart beginning May 1, 2008. The DNR paid \$11,000 in fines to the "Penalty Fund" since the beginning of the five year compliance period which began July 1, 2007. The funds are to be used for mutually agreed upon watershed improvement projects.

Additionally, we did have a major break through in our effort to propagate the Lake Township lakeside buffer ordinance and phosphate fertilization ban to the Benzonia Township portion of Platte Lake. As you may remember, Lake Township passed a zoning overlay for the Lake Township portion of Platte Lake in 2005. The overlay allowed for a phosphate fertilization ban, mowing of beach areas as long as the clippings were properly disposed of (deposited where they cannot decay and re-enter the lake) and storm water retention on new construction to prevent direct run off to the lake from roofs, driveways, patios, etc. The Benzie County Planning Commission was reluctant to adopt the ordinance for the Benzonia township portion of Platte Lake. They wanted a more restrictive control of your beach i.e. a four foot path to the beach and the cleared area was 25 foot wide and only four feet from the waters edge and no grass mowing in the buffer zone. The PLIA membership at large voted several times at PLIA Annual Meetings over the years against such restrictions. Most people viewed what Benzie County wanted to implement was a "take away". Additionally, our experts pointed out that active beach management correctly done reduces phosphorus discharge to the lake over doing nothing.

Over the years we presented much testimony and reports about the effectiveness of what Lake Township had adopted versus what they wanted to implement. The Lake Township Overlay when fully implemented would in the long term reduce phosphorus discharge to the lake i.e. approx. 150 lbs P from lakeside buffer strip management, 200 lbs from the phosphate fertilization ban and eventually up to 190 lbs from storm water retention basins as existing lakeside residences are modified/rebuilt. These are phosphorus reduction measures that would be significant enablers to the achievement of the 8.0 ug/l Platte Lake phosphorus standard. Even the DNR supported those measures in a most recent letter to the Benzie County Planning Commission. Every pound of phosphorus reduction helps Platte Lake!

After many meetings and much haggling that was way too time consuming and numerous to mention in this writing, the Benzie county Planning Commission agreed on March 12, 2009 to move forward with the next step of our request for the adoption of the zoning overlay district for the Benzonia Township portion of Platte Lake. As of this writing, there is a **7:00 PM June 3, 2009 public hearing on the proposed Platte Lakes Area Management Plan overlay district at the Benzie county Government Center.**

Please make every effort to attend and express your support for the zoning overlay district that was adopted by Lake Township in 2005! Platte Lake needs you to be there to voice your support. The lake cannot speak for itself! We need you to speak for it! We want to make a very strong statement in that **VOTING AGAINST THE ADOPTION OF THIS OVERLAY DISTRICT IS JUST PLAIN BEING ENVIRONMENTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE!** Trust me; you will hear all sorts of nonsensical negative comments on the adoption of the Platte Lakes Area Management Plan Overlay district. We have been hearing them for five years! They are nonsense.

If this proposed overlay district fails, we will ultimately have to review every land use permit in the watershed as it relates to impacting the 8.0 ug/l phosphorus standard. Something we will do if we have to in terms of protecting Platte Lake from further degradation. We do not feel that is the most efficient way to solve the problem in the long term.

We will have additional material on this issue on the PLIA web site, etc. If there are changes in meeting times, etc. we will try and get back to you. Again, it is really important for the well being of Platte Lake that we support this issue and communicate our position to Benzie County.

We have also been working with Dr. Canale to pull together what the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality calls a Phosphorus TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) guideline for the Platte River Watershed. Once adopted, it is incumbent on the DEQ to ensure the watershed guidelines are complied with by all State and Local permitting agencies. We are making great progress and will publish documents and findings in the very near future.

It has also come to our attention that the Settlement Agreement between the Michigan DEQ, Bonney Brothers and Graceland Fruit over the blueberry waste dumping several years ago on property east of US-31 has encountered a few snags. The remediation plan for the small stream that crosses and runs parallel to US-31 south of the old trout ponds has been rejected in a March 18, 2009 DEQ letter to the defendants. The stream has turned orange over the past several years as a result of the illegal dumping. Be advised we have been following this case for many years and made a decision not to get involved as there were originally four sets of attorneys involved and we felt a fifth set would be counter productive. We were encouraged with the Settlement Agreement that was signed July 18, 2008. If that Settlement Agreement is not complied with, we will get involved in defense of Platte Lake.

We still need money, members and people willing to help. If you know of a new neighbor that has recently purchased property, please recruit them. Please introduce them to the PLIA. Tell them about what we have done. Encourage them to visit the PLIA website and to contact us with any comments or questions. Make sure they have a copy of this newsletter. The more members we have, the easier the financial burden on all of us.

Thanks for Your Continued Support,

Wilfred Swiecki  
President, PLIA