

PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
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THE STATE OF THE LAKE

After a mid-June decline in water clarity, the lake has recovered to what some describe as “Drop Dead Gorgeous!” Please see attached Platte Lake Secchi Disk Readings. I must point out that the Secchi depth observations are taken in the 90-ft basin on the west-end of the lake. The near shore clarity appears to be better than that at the 90 ft basin. Also, when the low readings in mid-June were obtained, the general level of clarity on the north shore was much better than that on the south or west shore of the lake. We have some theories as to why, but no “hard” evidence as of this writing. We did notice some rather large amounts of pollen that appeared to be deposited directly into the lake coincident with the low June readings.

Based on what I have observed in mid to late July on the north/north east shore, Platte Lake is as clear as I remember observing it in the mid to late 1950’s. Some, who are “slightly” older than I, feel we still have a little more to go to get to the levels of clarity they remember. We will see.

I must say, a lot of very knowledgeable people had previously told us that we could never restore Platte Lake to its prior pristine beauty. They were wrong!

The objective now is to do whatever is necessary to ensure Platte Lake is never ever degraded again for any reason!

CONSENT JUDGMENT IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Consent Judgment continues to proceed extremely well. The efforts of Dr. Canale, Implementation Coordinator and Gary Whelan, DNR Hatchery Operations Manager to keep things focused and “on track” has been noteworthy. I must again commend Gary Whelan on his effort and pro-active resourceful attitude. It has been a pleasure working with people who are committed to getting things done in spite of innumerable obstacles, hurdles and bureaucratic entanglements.

Highlights:

- Bi-weekly meetings/phone conferences were maintained with Gary Whelan, Dr. Canale and myself at nominally two-week intervals since the last PLIA Annual meeting. Agendas and minutes were maintained for all meetings.
- Dr. Canale reported his findings as to 2001 compliance and future recommendations at a May 10, 2002 meeting at the Hatchery. Dr. Canale will summarize his findings at the meeting today. Copies of his 2001 report will be available at the meeting.
- Central Michigan University has been contracted to perform water sample analysis at considerable saving from the prior laboratory that was employed. This saving enabled the hiring of a full time DNR technician engaged in the collection of water samples, field data collection and stream flow measurement. We now are obtaining a

much greater amount of information than could be obtained with our previous sample collection/analysis vendor and our \$150K/year budget.

- Direct collaboration with the Benzie Conservation District on the watershed planning grant and data collection and sharing has allowed the funding of a watershed model at the rate of approx. \$20K/year for the next three years. LimnoTech of Ann Arbor will be developing a “basins” model for the Platte River watershed. The DNR, PLIA and the Benzie Conservation District have signed an Interlocal Agreement to cooperate in the Watershed endeavor in 2001. The National Park Service has yet to sign the agreement after over a year of prodding.
- Our efforts to construct an interactive database are ongoing and we hope to have it up and running shortly.
- Saloni Clerk, Queens University, Kingston Ontario, completed a comprehensive analysis of Platte Lake sediment core samples in December 2001. The report, Fossil Chironomids as Indicators of Water Quality Impacts from Aquaculture Activities, identified the past history of the lake as reflected in the analysis of sediment cores. She was able to observe changes in fossil chironomid assemblages and relate their changes to the increased nutrient loading from the hatchery in the late sixties and early seventies. A copy will be available at the Annual Meeting for review. We will arrange to have it copied for those who would like one.
- As mention in the March 30, 2002 Newsletter, the DNR paid a total of \$4000.00 in fines for a phosphorus overruns in 2001. That money is targeted for watershed improvement projects. The first of which is the Deadstream fish ladder. The final design of the ladder is complete. We are moving forward with the permitting process and meetings with the Road and Drain Commission personnel.
- Hatchery renovation is discussed at the length during the bi-weekly meetings. Things are on target. Gary Whelan will present a summary of what has been accomplished to date as well as final plans and timing.
- YTD Date Hatchery discharge through June is in compliance with the Settlement Agreement and we expect continued compliance through year-end.

PLATTE LAKE WATER CLARITY AND YOU

As mentioned earlier, Platte Lake is having one of its better years relative to water clarity. There are many reasons for this improvement over last year. Dr. Canale will go into detail during his presentation as to what some of the causal factors were that contributed to last years decline.

Some things that helped this year were:

1. Increase water flow into the lake. Over 40% higher than 2001.
2. Hatchery percentage utilization of the Platte River was reduced to lower than 10%.
3. We did not experience an alewife die off and the resultant phosphorus discharge directly into the lake.

There are many other factors involved. Some are well understood and others are more complex and confounding and will become better known as our effort to monitor and analyze lake and watershed data continues. What we do know is that Platte Lake is ON THE EDGE. Small changes in phosphorus result in large changes in water clarity. That is where you come in. You all can individually make small changes that collectively will contribute to making a large

change that will ensure the water clarity that we are presently experiencing will be the norm as opposed to the exception.

Some things you can do now:

1. Stop lawn fertilization! If you must fertilize, **use phosphorus free lawn fertilizer**. It can be purchased locally at the Farmers Daughters at 4381 River Rd, Frankfort, MI. A sample will be on display at the Annual Meeting.
2. Remove all beach debris, leaves, etc. and deposit on a back lot, etc. so they cannot re-enter the lake.
3. Have your septic tank pumped yearly if you are a full time resident.
4. If you are a season resident, use RV antifreeze for winterizing toilets and drain traps. Do not use ethylene glycol based automotive anti-freeze. It is toxic.
5. Maintain green belts at the lake edge so as to discourage erosion and run off.
6. Use Lake Water to water lawns and gardens. It is high in nitrogen.
7. Encourage your neighbors to do all of the above.

Again, we all can do something to directly help restore and maintain Platte Lake.

FISH PLANTING

A result of a continued long term lobbying effort on the part of Dr. Jerry Heiman, the DNR planted 68,000 walleye this spring and is expected to maintain that level of planting for three consecutive years. Hopefully that will give a real boost to the ultimate restoration of what was once a spectacular Platte Lake walleye fishery in years past.

ZEBRA MUSSELS

The Zebra Mussel invasion of Platte Lake has begun. We will have samples available at the Annual Meeting. They appear to be well distributed throughout the lake and most appear to be first year mussels. We expect them to really multiply next year. They appear to be replacing a once abundant native clam population that has all but disappeared.

PLATTE LAKE SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Dr. Heiman will be presenting the latest information on the Benzie County Septic System Ordinance, holding tanks and alternative systems at the Annual Meeting.

PLATTE LAKE ENDOWMENT FUND

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the level of funding for water sampling, analysis, etc. is \$150K/year. That funding will stop once hatchery renovation is complete and the DNR has demonstrated compliance to the agreed upon discharge standard of 175 lb P/yr for five continuous years. We expect that to happen in the 2009 to 2010 time frame. At that time all lake monitoring, etc. will be our responsibility.

You Officers and Board have had considerable discussion over the past year as to how we can start planning now for the future. To support a \$150K/yr effort or even a subset of that funding level will require some significant amount of capital to be at work generating income. The best

method appears to be the establishment of an endowment fund that will be a vehicle to accept donations of all types, i.e. cash, stock, property etc. and allow it to grow tax free with the dedicated purpose of funding the PLIA. We will be discussing this matter in detail at the meeting and voting on moving forward with the continued research and the establishment of a fund(s) over the upcoming year. We will be looking forward to your direct input at the meeting.

SUMMARY

We are on the road to progress as it relates to Platte Lake restoration. As I stated last year, I cannot begin to tell you how much easier it is today as opposed to when we were actively engaged in the lawsuit! We have had an extremely successful year in recruiting over 100 new members! We still need your individual and collective help. We need you to actively do the things that will minimize your phosphorus input to the lake and get your neighbors who are not PLIA members to become PLIA members and actively do what they can to reduce their phosphorus input to the lake! Also, do not forget to send dues and any contributions, as we always need money. This is especially critical for the PLIA to be able to continue efforts in the future when the Settlement Agreement funding ends.

Also in closing, I must say that I am extremely proud and thankful for the effort expended by your Officers, Board and membership at large. Collectively they had spend hundreds of hours in meetings representing the PLIA, membership recruiting, collecting lake data, collecting river data, fall salmon run fish counting, processing and analyzing data, writing reports, processing e-mail and most importantly performing vital administrative tasks that allow the Platte Lake Improvement Association to continue to exist.

Thank You,

Wilfred J. Swiecki
President, PLIA

P. S. If there are any questions, comments or concerns please raise them during the meeting.
If issues arise at a later date, please feel free to call me:

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