

**PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. BOX 272**  
**HONOR, MICHIGAN 49640-0272**  
August 6, 2005

**THE STATE OF THE LAKE**

Platte Lake clarity is off from its high in 2004. We do not have a complete analysis as all the data has not been received. The bottom line is that the in-lake phosphorus levels are higher than they were in 2004. The question of the day is where did it all come from? What we know for certain is that the YTD hatchery loading is 104 lb P versus approx. 40 lb P in 2004. But be advised, that is not enough to explain the decline. We highly suspect that Mother Nature has dealt us a blow this spring with the lack of rain and the marked increase in pollen from the surrounding trees which coated the surface of the lake, automobiles, etc. This was particularly evident prior to the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend rain event. Again at this time, we cannot explain what happened by what came into the lake from upstream. Zebra mussels notwithstanding, until the phosphorus levels come down, the lake water clarity will not increase. Hopefully things will settle out in time as we all try to reduce our phosphorus contribution to the lake. We know what a beautiful lake we had last year when the levels were down and we expect to see those levels in the future.

We will have a more extensive in-lake modeling effort over the next year to help gain some insight into what is driving the week to week changes in water clarity i.e. the 21 ft to 10 ft reduction in secchi depth readings in one week. If anyone has any information as to changes and or things that have happened that we may not be aware, please get back to us. We need all the help and feedback we can get.

The lake is the ultimate scorekeeper in terms of what it receives and how it reacts as it relates to clarity. It is something we cannot change and it is there for all to see.

**CONSENT JUDGMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

As mentioned last year, the implementation of the Consent Judgment continues to proceed in an “outstanding” manner. The efforts of Dr. Canale, Implementation Coordinator and Gary Whelan, DNR Hatchery Operations Manager are to be commended. The DNR/PLIA/Implementation Coordinator “Team” is functioning well and is doing everything we could expect and more.

The team continues to meet bi-weekly with agenda and minutes. We are now in our second year of the three year test period that began June 30, 2004. When that expires June 30, 2007, the hatchery will go into the five year compliance period where phosphorus discharge limits will change from 225 lb P/yr to 175 lb P/yr and the three month maximum discharge will be reduced from the current 70 lb P per 3 months to 55 lb P per 3 months. Be advised that even though 2004 was our best year to date, the three month discharge level was violated in November and if the final 55 lb P/3 month limit were in force, there would have been violations for four month running. The five year compliance discharge levels are very near what we estimate the old rearing station was discharging prior to the salmon program. The bottom line is that we can still expect further phosphorus reductions from the hatchery in the coming years.

Gary Whelan, MDNR, was an active presenter along with Dr. Canale and I at the Lake Township and Benzie County Planning Commission last fall and winter. His efforts were a key enabler to the passage of the PLIA modifications to the Lake Township Buffer Ordinance which will be discussed in the meeting.

Additionally, the Platte Lake sediment study that will characterize the relationship of phosphorus release and oxygen uptake of the lake sediments continues. This study is funded by the Settlement Agreement and will provide a key input as to how much of the increase in Platte Lake phosphorus levels are due to the release of phosphorus stored in the sediments in previous years.

### **PLATTE LAKE FOAM**

The shoreline foaming problem appears to have reduced in intensity from the fall of 2003 although, it is definitely still there. It is the opinion of Dr. Scott McNaught of CMU that the foam is the result of the decomposition of primarily the floating algae and resultant surfactant formation that accumulates on the surface of the water and the winds direct it to the shoreline. We agree. The amount of foam is increased by the zebra mussels. Zebra mussels do a great job of filtering algae, but cannot filter the floating algae. The floating algae become a bigger fraction of the total algae population and create a greater potential for foam formation when they decompose.

### **PLATTE LAKE FISH MANAGEMENT**

To the best of our knowledge there have been no planting of walleye or northern pike in or upstream of Platte Lake in 2005. Fishing by all anecdotal accounts appears to be great. Reported good catches of small mouth bass, walleye, perch and rock bass. A few reports of large northern pike and trophy sized catfish.

We had a very successful long nose gar netting and removal program this June. A total of 286 long nose gar were removed from two nets over an approx. three week period on the north shore of the lake. The longest fish was 39 inches. We expect to continue long nose gar netting in cooperation with the DNR next year. Our biggest problem is fish disposal. Please let us know if you know of anyone with upland property who would be willing to dispose of the fish. At present we haul them to the land fill and pay \$20.00 for a large cooler full. Many thanks to Tom Rozich, Scott Heintzelman and Robert Kerry of the MDNR for net installation and removal and to Jerry Heiman, Bill Berridge, and Maris Ziemelis for manning the nets.

### **FALL SALMON RUN**

Last year a total of 16,285 coho adults, 801 coho jacks, 515 chinook adults and 44 chinook jacks were passed upstream. 12,969 coho adults, 630 coho jacks, 432 chinook adults and 3 chinook jacks were received and harvested at the upstream hatchery. All within the 20,000 adult coho and 100 adult Chinook limits of the Settlement Agreement. Many thanks to Tom Inman for his continued effort at representing the PLIA during lower weir fish passage.

## **FOUNDATION/ENDOWMENT FUND**

Quite frankly, we have not made any progress during the past year on setting up the foundation/endowment fund. It is something we desperately need to do to ensure a source of funding when the DNR stop funding the lake and river sampling program in 2012. I know 2012 sounds like a long way off, but we need to build a nest egg in a foundation to at least fund a subset of what we are presently doing. Present costs are running approx \$200,000.00 per year. We are paying 2% per the Settlement Agreement. We need all the help we can get with ideas, contributions, etc. We need several people to get involved and carry this effort through to completion.

## **PLATTE LAKE SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

As stated last year, Benzie County Health Dept. regulations now allow alternative septic disposal systems on sites not suitable for standard septic and drain field if they have at least 12" of suitable soils and enough square ft. area for a larger drain field. Please contact the Health Department for site specific information. Jerry Heiman's alternate system is installed and working. Additionally, Al Amstutz is spear heading a group of Birch Point residents with a cluster system that connects multiple homes to an upland drain field. Jerry will be available for questions at the meeting. Please contact the lake association if you require additional information.

## **DRAFT BENZIE COUNTY BUFFER ZONE ORDINANCE**

I am gratified to say that significant progress has been made. The PLIA's language has been incorporated verbatim into the Lake Township Buffer ordinance in the form of what is now titled the Platte Lakes Area Management Plan. The document is available on the PLIA WEB site [www.platte-lake.org](http://www.platte-lake.org). The ordinance amendment is expected to take effect August 20, 2005. Please note that this only covers the Lake Township portion of the Platte Lake and Little Platte Lake. The Benzonia township portion of Platte Lake is still under threat of potentially adopting the Benzie County Buffer zone proposal which we feel is not in yours or Platte Lake's best interest. Our efforts will be to get Benzie county Planning Commission and the Benzie County Commissioners to adopt the Platte Lakes Area Management Plan as written.

The adopted management plan allows the mowing of lawns/vegetation in the buffer zone as long as the clipping are collected and removed to suitable upland disposal site i.e. at least as far back as an approved septic drain field. The mowing height must be such that it does not destroy the root structure. It also includes a fertilization ban within the buffer zone and a phosphate fertilization ban throughout the management area i.e. approx. between Platte Road and the lake and between Deadstream road and the lake.

Additionally, the ordinance provides clear direction that any existing erosion within the buffer zone to the adjacent water body identified by the Soil Erosion Control Agent must be corrected by approved soil erosion control measures. We will discuss this matter extensively at the meeting.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR PLATTE LAKE?

Some things all of you can do now:

1. Stop lawn fertilization! If you must fertilize, **use phosphorus free lawn fertilizer**. It can be purchased locally. If you cannot find it, contact us.
2. Remove all beach debris, leaves, etc. and deposit on a back lot, etc. so they cannot re-enter the lake. This is best done in the fall and again in the spring after ice out.
3. Have your septic tank pumped yearly if you are a full time resident.
4. If you have an erosion problem....FIX IT! Maintain a green belt at the waters edge in an effort to help control the problem. When you harvest the green belt to remove phosphorus via deposition on a back lot, etc., ensure that you leave the root structure.
5. Use Lake Water to water lawns and gardens. It is high in nitrogen and it will remove phosphorus from the lake.
6. Encourage your neighbors to do all of the above.
7. Visit new neighbors and encourage them to help us by joining the PLIA. We need everyone who uses the lake involved.
8. If you are a seasonal resident, use RV antifreeze for winterizing toilets and drain traps. Do not use ethylene glycol based automotive anti-freeze. It is toxic.

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

## SUMMARY

We have a great lake. It still confounds us at times and we still need further scientific study to understand why it does what it does in terms of clarity, etc. But, we are well on our way toward restoration. We all need to look in the mirror and do our part. Each and every one of you must do something. The time to wait for someone else to do something as stated last year has passed. It is up to us on an individual and collective basis. 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 still need money.

Also in closing, I must again say that I am extremely proud and thankful for the effort expended by your Officers, Board and membership at large. Their dedicated effort on behalf of Platte Lake is note worthy.

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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