

ANNUAL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 15, 7:30 P.M.
INVERNESS COUNTRY CLUB
13892 NORTH TERRITORIAL RD

Program will include: Ken Dodge, District Fisheries Biologist for the DNR, speaking on fishing conditions at North Lake; and Jim Drolett, Dexter Township Supervisor, giving an update on the development of the Portage Lake sewage disposal system.

Annual Dues: Dues continue to be \$5.00 per year and should be forwarded to Kelli Kadlec, Association Treasurer, at 6995 Westbourne, Chelsea, MI 48118. Also, dues may be paid at the annual meeting or to the board member representing your landing. Checks should be made payable to the North Lake Protection Association.

Lakefront Lawn Care Tips

Lakefront property owners should not fertilize unless absolutely necessary. If one must fertilize, special attention should be given to the type of fertilizer used. Excess fertilizer can wash into the lake and stimulate unwanted aquatic plant growth.

The plant nutrients found in commercial fertilizers are nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. Since phosphorous is the nutrient which most often stimulates unwanted aquatic plant growth in lakes, the lakefront property owner should take steps to insure phosphorous inputs to the lake are minimized.

The following practices will help reduce nutrient losses from lakefront lawns:

1. If you are establishing a lawn, plant fescue rather than bluegrass. Fescue grass requires much less fertilizer.
2. Do not use a fertilizer containing phosphorous or potash unless a soil test specifically indicates a need for these nutrients.
3. Use the smallest amount of fertilizer necessary to maintain a good grass cover. Fertilize in the spring or early summer using a small amount of a soluble form of nitrogen (urea, ammonium nitrate, or ammonium sulfate).
4. Water sparingly to avoid washing or leaching nutrients into the lake.
5. In the fall, rake and dispose of leaves away from the lake (compost if possible). Do not burn leaves near shore. Nutrients concentrate in the ash and are easily washed into the lake.

Septic system troubles cause major problems for owners

Throughout Washtenaw County and even on North Lake, homes are vacant. Owners would like to sell, but cannot. Purchasers are anxious to buy, but cannot. The problem, one which more and more North Lake residents are having to deal with, is inadequate water and sewage systems.

Without Washtenaw County Health Department approval, financial institutions are reluctant to mortgage the property. The owners cannot afford the thousands of dollars of repairs needed to bring the systems up to Health Department standards. So the house remains vacant.

Almost all problems with wells and septic systems can be diagnosed and corrected before they reach the crisis stage as above. To learn what the Washtenaw County requirements are and common methods of prevention and repair, we have spoken with two of the county's leading authorities on the subject: Mr. Marty Straub, a Washtenaw County Commissioner and member of the Board of Health; and Mr. Barry Johnson, Director of Environmental Health for Washtenaw County.

According to Marty Straub, the most common problems the Board of Health addresses take three forms. First, an owner may wish to sell, but a purchaser's bank may require a Health Department inspection before approving a loan. The bank wishes to limit their lending risk by checking to see that the property does not pose a health hazard or need thousands of dollars of repairs to the well and septic system. Problems sometimes arise even if the system is working well, but is not meeting today's stricter Health Department regulations.

Secondly, a property owner may wish to construct an addition or turn a cottage into a year-round home. In these cases, the septic systems may be inadequate as they were never designed to handle the added loads. This becomes a serious problem if the property is too small to add additional drainage or if the well and septic systems are located in areas where

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Lake Association can use your help

The North Lake Protection Association is made up of residents, property owners, and friends concerned with providing crime prevention and a sound ecological and environmental balance in and around North Lake. All participation is strictly voluntary and time commitments are minimal considering the positive results produced for the lake and your property. If you are interested in helping protect North Lake by serving as an officer or on a committee, please contact a current officer or your landing representative. Your Assistance is valuable in aiding our committees and in preserving North Lake.

Septic system concerns (cont.)

they cannot be expanded under current health requirements.

Lastly, major problems can occur if any part of a dwelling is destroyed, for instance, by fire. Before owners can rebuild, they must get the approval of building and health inspectors. Now the owner must comply with the current rules and regulations which are in most cases stricter and may deem his previous system obsolete. In fact, any time any part of a well and septic system fails, health department regulations state that the whole system must be brought up to current standards. For example, if a well becomes contaminated, both the well and septic system will be required to meet today's regulations. Owners may have to install a new septic system even if their old one functioned perfectly, but did not meet current regulations.

While these problems can be considered major, they are not without solution. Many of the problems can be resolved inexpensively and without major code variances. The Washtenaw County Health Department wishes to insure the safety of the property owner and his neighbors, but put as little burden upon the property owner as possible. According to Health Department publications, regulations require that, "All facilities for the disposal of human excreta or liquid sewage shall be so constructed, maintained and operated so that there is:

- (a) no access to this possible cause of sickness and source of filth by flies, rodents, or other vectors of disease or by persons or domestic pets;
- (b) no unlawful pollution of any stream or other body of water
- (c) adequate isolation to protect wells or other sources of water supply from contamination;
- (d) freedom from odor nuisance;
- (e) no discharge of septic tank effluent onto the surface of the ground."

While these are the rules and regulations, there are a number of ways they can be met. Board of Health member Marty Straub said "In each case we look at the alternatives and dangers. Generally we can make adjustments on the recommendation of the inspector. Ultimately, most are resolved with no variances with pretty standard things that allow for reductions." In these instances Mr. Straub is referring to a number of measures which reduce the input to septic systems and may make an existing or smaller system sufficient. Regarding cost, the common solutions range from no cost water saving measures to the highly expensive on site waste processing units. Each situation is determined separately, depending on specific conditions. Most deal with the reduction of water flow by up to 50 percent into the septic system. Mr. Barry Johnson, Director of Environmental Health, provides the following list of common alternatives a property owner may be faced with if involved with water and septic system problems.

A. Low cost measures

- 1. Conserving water use in cleaning, gardening, etc.

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Gate helps prevent lake crime

In a measure designed to combat illegal activities on the lake, the North Lake Protection Association operates a gate at the public access site. The special permit was granted by the Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with Mr. John LaBossiere, Director of the Pinckney Recreation Area. This gate should help prevent late night and early morning thefts on the lake.

Beginning May through December the access site will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for regular public use, but will remain locked during the late night hours. The Department of Natural Resources maintains the access ramp, gate and lock, while NLPA members will tend to the opening and closing. Signs stating the operating hours are posted at the entrance to inform access site users. Volunteers are needed to lock and unlock the gate. If you are willing to help, please call George Carter at 475-1570.

Residents control lake weeds

For the last two years, several property owners have undertaken a weed control program. This program involved chemical control under a permit from the Department of Natural Resources and was, in part, an experiment. Results were positive, however most authorities do not believe that chemical treatment is a viable long term solution. Other residents are experimenting with limited cutting or "harvesting" using a specially designed aquatic weed cutter. If you are interested in or concerned about aquatic weed control, contact Virginia Bachman, Chairperson of the Weed Control Committee, at 475-1817.

NORTH LAKE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION Executive Board

Position	Member	Landing	Phone
President	George Carter	Gilbert Drive	475-1570
Sec/Treas	Kelli Kadlec	Park Lawn	475-7256
Director	Dan Kruse	Glen Oaks	475-7170
Director	Mary Lou Frendt	Stonehedge	475-3480
Director	Dave Classon	N. Lake Farms	475-1255
Director	Ted Lane	W. Gilbert Dr.	475-7931
Director	vacant	Noah's Landing	
Director	Dave Pruess	Webb Shore	475-8146
Director	vacant	East End	

Soane Dr.

Septic system concerns (cont.)

2. Washing only full loads of clothes
 3. Don't allow water to run when washing dishes by hand
 4. Wash dishes only when dishwasher is full
 5. Repair leaks
 6. Insulate pipes
- B. Retrofitting with inexpensive items
1. Install flow reducers on faucets and shower heads
 2. Install water dams or bottles in toilet tanks
 3. Remove downspout water, water softening waste, and footing or sump pump water from draining into the septic system.
- C. Retrofitting with moderately expensive devices
1. Install low flow toilets
 2. Install low flow clothes washer
 3. Install low flow dishwasher
- D. Correction involving major expense
1. Install on site waste mangement systems which may include holding tanks, chemical treatment, or waste incineration.
 2. Construct an additional small drainfield (if property size is a factor) and alternat drain fields through a valving system.
 3. Relocation of drainfield and/or well.

In each case, the sanatarian or health inspector will note possible solutions to any problems when reporting an inspection. In instances where a solution isn't easily or inexpensively obtained, the property owner has the opportunity to appeal to the Board of Health. This committee can grant individual variances from the rules and regulations under the criteria that the variance will pose no substantial health hazard and conforming to the current health codes would cause unnecessary hardship. The five members will hear the landowner and take recommendations from the Health Department in reaching any decision.

Board member Marty Straub said that he recognizes the landowners' concerns and is aware of their position. Usually by the time a person appeals, Straub said he is satisfied that the land owners and Health Department have worked through most of the problems. He explains that in the cases he has examined, the Health Department has exhausted every avenue in resolving any problems. At this point, the board can make a decision or issue alternatives. In many cases, the land owner must then make the final decisions.

In certain cases, when property owners have been faced with high repair costs, another unappealing option, a six month deed restriction can be imposed. Six month deed restrictions legally prohibit a person from using his property half of the year or until the water and septic system problems have been corrected. These cases typically arise when property owners wish to add an addition or remodel. Any time a building permit is issued, a building inspector or the

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Health Department can check the system and may require the system to meet present regulations. If the owner makes the house improvements, but does not update the septic and well system, he may have to agree to use the property only half the year. This severely affects future resale value and use of the property.

The six month restrictions and the Board of Health have come under severe criticism from land owners. Three years ago, as a new member of the Board of Health, Marty Straub investigated the situation. To this criticism he replies, "After looking into the situation, I found that in every instance, the property owner was offered alternatives." He admits the alternatives were usually quite expensive, but says, "Because of the cost, the owners have taken the alternative that has cost the least."

Mr. Straub states that situations like this sometimes put the Board of Health in a bad position. "Typically, the Board of Health trys to make the best of the situation. We have the difficult problem of trying to protect the neighbors and the property owner, but also give the homeowner help of the least costly means."

Obviously, these are situations the North Lake residents want to avoid. Therefor, the best advice has to deal with prevention. Homeowners should maintain their septic systems to keep them in good working conditions. Additionally, owners may want to adopt some of the low cost and no cost methods of limiting septic input which increases the effectiveness and reduces the strain on the current system. If you are considering building or selling your home, you will be best off contacting the Health Department while in the planning stages. Their help now may save time, money and headaches in the future. For additional information, contact the Washtenaw County Health Department, Environmental Services Division, 2355 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103 or (313) 994-2492.

Portage Lake to develop new waste water treatment site

Residents at Portage and Baseline Lakes continue efforts to develop a system to correct septic system related water problems. Dexter Township has taken an option to purchase 120 acres of land at the corner of Dexter-Pinckney and Stinchfieldwoods roads, to be used as an on-site waste water treatment area for a Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) system. According to Jim Drollet, Dexter Township Supervisor, this would provide Portage Lake residents with a modern and cost-effective sewer system and will not cost Dexter Township residents, other than those in the special assessment district, any money. This approach may well be considered by residents of other area lakes as a solution to emergency septic problems and as a means to protect the use and value of their property.