

# THE LAKER

February 3, 1997

## Winter Meeting:

The 1997 winter meeting of the North Lake Protection Association (NLPA) will be held at 7:00 pm on Wed. March 12 at the clubhouse of the Inverness Golf Club on North Territorial Road. The meeting is open to all North Lake residents and interested persons.

### AGENDA:

- **Results of 1996 lake survey**  
Presented By Walter Fusilier of Water Quality Investigators
- **Boating safety**
- **Slalom Ski course**

### Other Guest Speakers:

Thanks to those who supported our efforts to treat the lake with their signatures and/or donations. A total of \$12,520.00 was received for 1996, \$1,070.00 for dues and \$11,450.00 for weed treatment.

We hope that the acreage requiring treatment continues to diminish in future years, however we must all continue our efforts to reduce the amounts of nutrients in the water (see below) and work to eradicate milfoil from our lake. It is most likely that we were just "lucky" this year, so we hope that we can count on your continued support next year. Only a low percentage of lakes experience a complete disappearance of milfoil. In others, it may appear to be gone for a few years and then return. In most cases, it is necessary to treat on a yearly basis to control the spread of this exotic plant.

## Why Do Weeds Grow?

Aquatic plants are necessary for shelter, food and oxygen production for fish, frogs, and other wildlife that live here. Plants grow particularly in the shallow areas on the West side, East side (near the boat launch) and near lagoons.

Nutrients in lake water (phosphorus, nitrogen, and other trace elements) fertilize aquatic weeds and make them grow faster and greener.

As weeds die, they sink to the bottom and decay, leaving sediments to fertilize next year's growth. It takes many years for nutrients to leave North Lake after they enter because not much water flows out of the lake. Instead, most water leaves by evaporation or percolating into the ground, leaving nutrients behind.

The same nutrients also feed microscopic algae that give the water a cloudy, greenish tinge, and other algae that form a mat of green "hair" as in the lagoon on the South side this spring. Algae (but not weeds) in shallow areas can be controlled by applying copper compounds that do not require a permit from the Dept. of Natural Resources.

## How Clean is N. Lake?

North Lake is relatively clean, and great for water sports and fishing. Its water quality is about mid-way between the

crystal-clear lakes of Canada and Northern Michigan (visibility more than 15 feet), and the shallow, algae-filled lakes of southern states. It rates an "A-minus" on Walter Fusilier's grading of Michigan lakes.

Water clarity in North Lake has been measured for several years. Since 1976, visibility of a target lowered by rope from a boat (a Secchi disk) was between 7 feet and 14 feet, with an average of about 10 feet.

These readings show that clarity of North Lake has been low at times, because of algae growth during periods of warm water and increased nutrients. However, overall water quality has not changed too much in the past 20 years. It is important to continue these readings, particularly with the sewer system being built this Fall.

We do not receive funding from the DNR (or any other state or federal agency) for our weed control efforts. There are no State funds budgeted for any rooted weed control program in Michigan. Agencies also do not stock our lake with fish (other than hybrid sunfish, which were recently stocked into the lake by DNR). Money for stocking other fish would have to come from homeowners.

Many lakers are frustrated that not all lake users contribute to weed control. The only way to ensure that everyone pays equally is by setting up a lake board and having it levy assessments on our taxes. A "lake board" usually consists of one member from the township board, one lake representative and one person from the DNR. Many lakers are against the idea of a lake board because it "gives up" control over most lake area decisions. If you feel strongly in favor/or against creating a lake board, please show up at the meeting and have your opinion heard.

Many lakers expressed concern that they do not have anywhere to dispose of their leaves/branches, lake weeds, and other compostable material. If you must burn, please do so responsibly, as far away from the water's edge as possible, and then remove the ashes (put them in your trash). If there is anyone that knows of a location where compostable material is accepted, please inform an NLPA representative, so we can share the information. (Burning areas or composting areas would be a good project for individual landing associations to organize).

## 1997 Milfoil Treatment

The NLPA will soon be asking for weed control contributions for this coming season. The 1997 donation will be reduced due to available funding from 1996.

Here is a brief history of North Lake milfoil treatments (acres treated out of the 250 acres in North Lake are shown below):

- 1989 treated 36 acres
- 1990 treated 32 acres (plus harvesting)
- 1991 treated 28 acres
- 1992 no treatment
- 1993 treated 47 acres
- 1994 treated 45 acres
- 1995 treated 38 acres
- 1996 treated 25 acres

North Lake has experienced significant relief from Eurasian milfoil for the 1996 season. Because of the unusually cool spring, the weeds were slow to come up. We postponed treatment until the weeds were high enough to properly survey the lake for treatment. We finally did treat 25 acres on June 24, 1996. (15 acres were treated with 2-4,D and 10 acres with "Reward," a contact herbicide). The total cost of treatment was \$5,575.00. The acreage requiring treatment was significantly lower than in past years, and lower than we predicted for this year (39 acres) when we began planning late in 1995.

Although several individuals expressed concern over lack of weed treatment to their frontage, please understand that we have only treated Eurasian milfoil, and not any other aquatic vegetation, native or exotic. Our treatment areas are also limited by "isolation distances" from drinking water wells around the lake. **Note: We must now keep a minimum distance of 100' from any drinking well, regardless of its depth. If your well is located within 30' of the lake, please contact Anne Koch at (313) 475-1481 to add your name and property location to the list.**

Overall, we were very happy with the response to the survey. It gave individuals a chance to inform us of their opinions on treatment of the lake. Many thanks to those that responded!

## Water Survey, 1996

Walter Fusilier of Water Quality Investigators, in Dexter has been contracted by NLPA to perform a water quality survey of North Lake in August, 1996. He will take samples of lake sediment for analysis and will analyze the water for nutrient concentrations (phosphate, nitrate) and will measure oxygen and temperatures at different depths.

You may have seen an article in the Ann Arbor News two months ago about Dr. Fusilier and his work to measure water quality in many lakes throughout Michigan. He also gave a very nice talk about water quality in North Lake at our 1995 annual meeting.

NLPA members will monitor water clarity weekly during the summer months to compare with past measurements and provide a baseline to compare future readings. It is particularly important for us to do this for the next few years to determine the effect on water quality of the new sewer system on North Lake.

## Boating Safety Rules

Now that summer is in full swing and the lake is crowded with boats (especially on weekends), it might be useful to review boating "rules of the road." Please cut this column out and post it where your family members can read it too:

• **The following rules apply to jet-skis and also to other power boats:**

- Always travel around the lake in a counter-clockwise direction.
- When "on plane" you must stay 100 feet away from other boats, swimmers, piers, rafts and the shoreline.

- Sailboats, rowboats, windsurfers and other non-powered craft always have the right-of-way over powered craft.
- Pass oncoming craft on the right. Slower boats go in the same direction as you should be passed on the left (both these rules are the same as driving a car).
- Avoid driving in circles repeatedly.
- Children less than 12 years old may not operate a power craft alone.
- Children 12 to 15 years old must carry a certificate with them showing that they have passed a water safety course to drive alone.
- **Unsafe drivers should be reported to the Washtenaw County Sheriff, who may issue a citation if necessary.**

• **Here are a few additional "common sense" rules:**

- Allow extra space around swimmers; there may be others that you don't see.
- Avoid crossing the center of the lake at high speed when traffic is heavy.
- Use special care when towing a skier or inflatable: **stop** if necessary to avoid other boats or obstructions. Don't make sudden turns if other boats are nearby. Avoid the center of the lake, especially if swimmers are present.
- Remember that the wake from your boat affects others. Don't drive so that your wake swamps yards or smaller craft.
- The noise from your motor may annoy others, especially if operated in one area for a long time; please be considerate.

• **These rules apply only to jet-skis:**

- The operator must wear the machine's safety lanyard.
- All passengers must wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device.
- No jumping wakes: operators must not be behind any boat within 150 feet.
- Jet-skis may only be operated between sunrise and sunset.