

THE LAKER

NORTH LAKE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

www.northlaker.org

JULY 2021

NLPA MISSION: *To protect the ecological, recreational and aesthetic well-being of North Lake.*

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, August 30, 2021 – 7pm

AGENDA

1. Review/Approve 2020 Minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Old Business
 - a. SAD Update
 - b. Algae problems/control
 - c. MICORP Update
4. New Business
5. Election of Officers
6. Adjourn

\$10 NLPA DUES

Please support your NLPA. Please make checks out to NLPA and send to Dick Frendt in the enclosed envelope. **Please include your email address if you did not receive the recent test email. We keep it confidential and only use it for important lake notices.**

In 2020 we raised about \$1600 in dues to support NLPA operations. We are pretty tightfisted with our funds but we could use added funds to support lake studies to help keep North Lake the gem we enjoy.

The \$1600 raised was from 46% of the NLPA members. We have 257 total member parcels (all owners who have lake frontage or who have deeded lake access). Only 57% of the lake front owners pay the \$10 dues, and only 29% of the lake access owners contribute. Fourteen percent of those who contribute give more than \$10, including four who gave \$100 each last year.

Please consider the value provided and if it is worth a contribution of ten bucks. We will appreciate it.

75 % Cut!

That's how much our Special Assessment District (SAD) tax for the North Lake project was reduced in 2020. Has anyone ever heard of any tax being cut by that amount? Not Likely.

We have had reductions of 50% on five occasions in the past and next year looks like another reduced year. That will be 7 of the 14 years with 50% or more reductions. A remarkable record, especially when you consider that the base rate is the same as it was in 2008 when the SAD was created. It is not a cut from an escalating rate; it is a cut from our old original rate.

How is this possible? Part luck and part hard work by those who track lake conditions and respond quickly to emerging problems, keeping them in check before they become larger problems. Folks like Dave Pruess and Paul Lammers along with our county specialist, our professional consultant and our application contractor. Many hours are invested in keeping North Lake the asset we enjoy.

We continue to fight infestations of milfoil, exotic pondweeds, starry stonewort, and of course the algae blooms. The latter has been our biggest problem of late, but fortunately, it is the least expensive to treat.

Next year, the SAD will be up for renewal and the county will hold public hearings to determine if it should be renewed. The same rates that were established in 2008 are again proposed, but the term may be seven or eight years (as opposed to the previous five year term) which would lock in the lower rates for a longer period. The NLPA urges you to participate in the hearings to voice your support or opposition. The NLPA has passed a motion supporting the renewal and hopes NLPA members support this proposal.

2021 LAKE REPORT

Paul Lammers and Dave Pruess have been active volunteers for many years performing lake inspections and working with the Lake Management team. Their input to this report provides an independent view of the North Lake Improvement Project.

We have been fortunate in recent years to have limited infestations of the invasive plants we find in North Lake. Hybrid Milfoil, Starry Stonewort, and Curly Leaf Pondweed have flourished in certain areas, but early treatment has kept them under control. A larger problem has been algae bloom outbreaks that have manifest themselves in the spring and reoccurred into August last year. We treated for algae on June 1, June 18, and July 28, 2020. In 2021, we treated a small area on June 10.

Recent changes by EGLE, Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, restricting the use of copper compounds in spawning areas of the lake, have significantly restricted our ability to treat algae blooms and invasive weed infestations in the lake. In the past, we monitored the lake for outbreaks and attempted to eradicate problem areas of weeds before they overwhelmed a location. This year, EGLE has restricted use of copper compounds to 25 percent of the lake area that is ten feet or less in depth. On North Lake this amounts to about 30 acres.

(con't. pg. 2, col. 2)

MUTE SWANS

The MI DNR did not perform a count of Mute Swans this year due to the Covid epidemic. The non-native Mute Swan reduction program initiated by the DNR in 2013 is having a substantial impact on the Mute Swan population levels. The DNR estimates for 2019 indicated about 7900 swans in the state; a 48% reduction from the pre-reduction program estimates. Trumpeter Swans were observed last fall on Wild Goose Lake as a rest stop during their migration.

LILY PAD PROBLEMS?

For the past seven years, we treated Lily Pad problems at requested docks. Under our DEQ permit we can treat a 20 foot wide access from your dock to the open water in the lake. This is done on a case by case basis. We currently have 35 lakefronts enrolled in the program but only a few required treatment in 2019 & 2020. *If you want an access cleared to your dock, you must send a written request, along with a photo of your dock from the lake with your home/access in the background for identification purposes. We want to treat your dock area, not your neighbor's. Send your Lily Pad request, by **August 6**, to:*

Richard Frendt
7837 Stonehenge Valley Dr.
Gregory, MI 48137
Or email your request to:
rjfrendt@aol.com

If you requested your dock area treated in 2020 or earlier, do not send a new request. We will treat your dock area assuming problems persist and the treatment is approved. Treatments can remain effective for three years or more and will only be treated as needed.

CAMP BURT SHURLY NEWS

The camp will be closed this year due to the Covid hangover. The Board made the decision early due to lead times required. Their decision was based on the uncertainties ahead.

Hopefully next year will bring back the sound of camp kids!

This restriction is in effect all of May and June. Unfortunately, copper compounds are also used on starry stonewort (an algae) and on other invasive plants in combination with other agents. The net result is only minimal treatment can be accomplished prior to July 1. No one on the Lake Management Team has the authority to bypass these restrictions. On the positive side, thunderstorms break up the algae and we've had a few storms this year!

We will be doing a study to determine the sources of the nutrients that cause the algae blooms and may be able to take more focused action to prevent the blooms before they happen. This will be funded by the SAD.

To help everyone understand the process involved in lake treatment, the following may be useful:

Lake inspections are conducted by the Lake Management Team (Keiser & Associates, Washtenaw County, Clarke Aquatics, & the NLPA) on a monthly basis from May through September. These inspections typically take place on Paul Lammers' pontoon boat and last two or more hours. A map of any infestations is created (see page 8) and a treatment plan is jointly agreed upon, if warranted. Consideration is given to the severity of the problem and on whether the growth will die off on its own. If action is deemed necessary, Clarke Aquatics schedules treatment.

The NLPA participants are primarily Dave Pruess and Paul Lammers. They make independent inspections throughout the season and keep everyone posted on their observations. They also take calls and emails from folks around the lake who have concerns. They have thick skins and will listen to most any complaint, but keep in mind every member on the Lake Management Team wants to do what is best for North Lake and its residents.

The invasive plants noted at the beginning of this article, plus algae, are the only plants treated on the lake. Native plants are not treated with the exception of Lily Pads that cause boating or swimming issues (see left column). Wild celery is becoming more of an issue over the years, but we have not treated it to date. If it continues to increase and control methods become available, this may change.

We have come a long way over the past 13 years of the Lake Improvement Project. Many of you can remember the huge masses of Eurasian milfoil that fouled our props and threatened to engulf the lake back in the early 2000s. Without the SAD, we would likely be in sad shape. Take a drive past Wild Goose Lake to see how a lake can be taken over by invasive weeds. Thanks to our team who protect North Lake!

If you would like more information regarding the North Lake Improvement Project, or information on the EGLE permit restrictions, go the Washtenaw County website under the North Lake Project at www.washtenaw.org/329/north-lake. To contact David Pruess or Paul Lammers, please use the email addresses below:

david.pruess@gmail.com

pblammers@gmail.com

CHANGES TO OUR LAKE TEAM

Washtenaw County contracts with two firms who provide services to the North Lake Improvement Project. Aquest, Inc. has been the consultant firm that proscribes the lake treatment protocols since our SAD started in 2008. They have been purchased by Keiser & Associates. Doug Pullman, the President of Aquest has been hired by Keiser to help make a smooth transition. Likewise, Aquatic Services, the application contractor, has been acquired by Clarke Aquatics, and they have retained Aquatic Services President, Jeff Knox and his application crew

WHERE ARE THE LARGEST STATE PARKS IN THE LOWER PENINSULA?

Right here! The Waterloo State Recreation Area includes 20,500 acres of forests, lakes and beaches with miles of hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross country skiing and other fun opportunities for everyone. It is the largest state park in the lower peninsula, and the third largest in the state. It adjoins the Pinckney State Recreation Area, the second largest state park in lower Michigan with 11,000 acres. They meet along M-52 at North Territorial Highway, together stretching from Pinckney to near Jackson, spanning three counties.

The Waterloo Recreation Area includes the Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center, the new DTE trail for bikers and hikers, dozens of lakes, beaches, camp sites, cabins, yurts, and recreational equipment. You can even reserve a free motorized track chair for the handicapped which allows those less mobile to get into the woods to enjoy nature and even hunt! They have provisions for gun rests and look like a mini tank coming down the trail.



(Call 734-475-8307 to reserve)

If you're looking for something to do on a summer weekend, consider hiking the Pinckney-Waterloo Trail which starts at Silver Lake near the Livingston and Washtenaw County line and ends at Portage Lake near Jackson (not the Portage Lake in Livingston County). It's 34 miles long and has over half a mile of elevation gain by the time you do all the ups and downs on the trail. If you turn around and return to Silver Lake, you can pick up that other half mile of elevation gain!

BIG BIRDS OF NORTH LAKE

This article is based on, and in some cases taken directly from, the following internet sources: allaboutbirds.org (Cornell Lab), michiganaudobon.org, BioKIDS.umich.edu, Michigan.gov DNR, Sandhill Crane Migration, haehnlesanctuary.org and the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine.

Yes, we have big birds on and around North Lake. Greater Sandhill Cranes, Great Blue Herons, Mute Swans and recently Bald Eagles and Osprey all are now found in the North Lake area. In this article we are concentrating on the "Greats", The Greater Sand Hill Cranes and the Great Blue Heron.

Greater Sandhill Cranes breed in mid-continental North America, including southern Michigan, and also in eastern Siberia. Lesser Sandhill Cranes breed in the Arctic and are "lesser" in size. There are also medium sized Sandhill Cranes in Florida and Mississippi (that don't migrate), and in Canada.

The Michigan variety grows up to 4' 6" tall with wingspans up to 7' 6". Males weigh-in at 10 to 12 pounds and females 8 to 10 pounds. Michigan Sandhills migrate to Florida (like many humans!) but they don't retire there. They usually leave in November, although some may delay a few weeks, and return in March.

Late in the summer, Sandhills abandon their nesting territories and flock to staging areas like the Haehnle Sanctuary in Jackson County. Staging areas typically provide abundant food, protected night roosting sites and the benefits of congregating in flocks during migration. Here the routes and traditions of older, experienced birds can be passed on to their less experienced young.

Sandhills prefer to migrate when the sun causes warming thermals to rise and there is a tail wind. By taking advantage of tail winds, flying in formation and by soaring, they are able to reduce energy expenditure by up to 30%. Flying at speeds up to 50 miles per hour, they can cover nearly 500 miles a day, often reaching altitudes of over a mile. In preparation for flight, one bird leans down, stretching its wide wings. Others notice and do the same. They rise as a group, filling the sky with movement and sound. Cranes on the ground often greet flocks flying past.

When they return in the spring, they are accompanied by last year's offspring, who stick around until the parents begin to build a new nest. Prior to finding their lifelong mate, juveniles from two to seven years old form adolescent groups. They may live 20 years or more, with the documented record being 36 years old.

Courtship includes elaborate "dances," with birds spreading their wings, leaping in the air while calling. The birds may touch beaks and throw twigs into the air. The courtship dance offers a rare way to tell the sexes apart. With necks extended, the birds point their bills. The female tilts her head slightly upward while the male points his bill straight up to the sky. The nest site is among marsh vegetation in shallow water (sometimes up to 3' deep), sometimes on dry ground close to water. The nest (built by both sexes) is a mound of plant material pulled up from around the site and may be built up from the marsh bottom or may be floating, anchored to standing plants.

There are usually two, sometimes one, rarely three eggs, pale olive to buff color, marked with brown or gray. Incubation is by both sexes, 29-32 days. The female does most of the incubating (typically all night, part of the day) with the "colts" leaving the nest within a day after hatching. Both parents feed the colts at first, but they gradually learn to feed themselves. At night, one parent cozies up in the nest with the colts. The other stands guard, sleeping on its feet. It will wake to flap and kick at great-horned owls, foxes and other predators that come too close. First flight occurs at about 65-75 days. They young are called colts due to their strong legs.

The body is a mousy gray with white cheeks and a red forehead. They purposely rub iron rich soil and vegetation on their newly molted feathers, staining them a rusty brown, which provides camouflage during nesting. Juvenile cranes lack the red forehead. Both males and females are colored alike. Their croaking call can be heard from over a mile depending on the wind. This loud, penetrating call is produced by a remarkably long 4-foot windpipe. The neck is only 2 feet long; to

(Con't. pg. 4, col. 2)



The sandhill Crane photos above reveal the grace and beauty of these birds. Native Americans worshipped the cranes and called upon them for longevity, wisdom, and immortality. The birds were Native American symbols of independence. A pair of cranes symbolizes good fortune and true love.

The Great Blue Heron embodied wisdom and patience. The Iroquois felt that the sight of one before a hunt was a good omen for success.

accommodate the extra length, the windpipe forms a loop next to the breastbone before attaching to the lungs. Sandhill Cranes hold the record as the oldest living bird species. A possible fossil wing bone of a Sandhill was found in a Nebraskan deposit dating back 10 million years. Fossils were found in Florida that dated 2.5 million years ago.

Their diet varies widely with location and season. Major food items include insects, roots of aquatic plants, rodents, snails, frogs, lizards, snakes, nestling birds, berries, and seeds. They will eat large quantities of cultivated grains when available. On the other hand, they are eaten by coyotes, raccoons and eagles.

In the 1940s, the Greater Sandhill Crane population had dwindled to about 1000 birds, but has recovered to a current population of around 100,000. The Lesser Sandhill Cranes number about 400,000. They migrate together in large flocks in the west, gathering in the huge Nebraska Platte River staging site.

A flock of Sandhill Cranes is sometimes called a "dance". Everyone is invited to the dance, there are no wallflowers. If you happen to spot a group of cranes soaring overhead boggie-ing south, you may want to pop a move just to acknowledge the party overhead.

A Great Blue Heron is about as great as a Greater Sandhill Crane. When you stretch out their curved neck (don't try this at home!) they have almost identical height and wingspan dimensions of Sandhill Cranes. However, they are substantially lighter due to their slimmer body; at 4 to 5 pounds they're only half the weight of the Greater Sandhill Crane.



Great Blue Herons

(Con't. Pg. 5, Col 2

LAKE LEVEL

In 2020, lake levels were near average for May through July but remained higher in August and September when we normally experience more decline.

This year started dry and the lake level on June 15 was the lowest for that date since we began recording in 2012. By July 1, the heavy rains of late June had raised the level 3¼ inches from the June 15 level. This is near average for July 1.

Good Fishin'



Oliver Latimer, grandson of Ted and Elaine Lane on Gilbert Dr, caught a 16" and a 19.5" bass in 2020, beating the Covid Blues!

NLPA BOARD

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Other differences are that they generally nest in tall trees in groups called a "herony" (a more specific term of rookery), and they find a new mate each year. If trees aren't available they may nest in tall bushes. A herony may have up to 500 nests or only a few.

Three to six pale blue eggs are laid and both parents incubate them. In about 27 days they begin to hatch. The nest is about 18" across the first year, but is added on each year it's used and may get to 4' across. The parents feed the baby herons (called baby herons) in the nest until they take their first flight at about 50 days. These young herons are not very gifted hunters and return to the nest to be fed by Mom and Dad for another three weeks.

The diet of the Great Blue Heron is mostly fish, but they will eat small mammals, insects, birds, ducklings, frogs and snakes. They capture their prey by spearing it with its long bill and swallowing it whole. They have been known to choke to death on prey too large to swallow.

They are tall waterbirds with long, S-shaped necks that have shaggy feathers. They have long, rounded wings, long pointed bills, and short tails. The bills are a yellowish color and the legs are yellowish-green to gray. Great blue herons have gray upper bodies, and their necks are streaked with white, black and rust-brown and have gray feathers on the back of their necks with chestnut colored feathers on their thighs. They feature a plume of back feathers that starts behind their eyes and extends out behind their heads. Males tend to be slightly larger than females.

Young great blue herons are overall darker in color. They have dark gray crowns and many dark gray streaks on their necks. The young herons do not have plumes on their heads or shaggy neck feathers like adults.

Great Blue Herons live to be about 15 years old although some may survive to 25 years. They are widely spread across North to Central America and the Caribbean. The northern birds migrate south when their lakes freeze over.

The herons are more protected from predation than Sandhill Cranes due to their nesting high in trees, but eagles, hawks and turkey vultures will attack them. An attack on a single nest in the herony may cause the entire herony to be abandoned. Great Blue Herons are also attacked in the water by raccoons on rare occasions.

For many years Mary Lou and I spent winters on the Gulf Coast of Texas on Mustang Island near Corpus Christi. One of the things I spent my time doing was surf fishing on the broad beach. A Great Blue Heron would often show up and stand about 20' away waiting for a free lunch. A small fish or a "hardhead" (a type of catfish with a bony head) that was discarded was immediately seized by the heron. If it was a hardhead, the heron would drop it, apparently not on its diet. Could this be the same heron I occasionally saw on our dock at North Lake. It was blue and gray with rust colored thighs and black plumes. Maybe it followed us back to North Lake from Texas.

Another heron named Bobo resided near the condo complex where we stayed. The condo management employed a horticulturist (Barb) who befriended this bird at some distressed point in its life and she continued to feed it regularly. Bobo would fly to her when she called and sometimes land on her head, awaiting its treat. If you would like a pet like this you could try putting a dead fish on your head and slowly wade around the lake. Hopefully, everyone who sees you will have read this article!

GOT WORMS?

Chances are, many of the fishermen on North Lake use earthworms as bait. Earthworms don't exist in the lake but fish love them. Researchers at the Berkley Fish Research Center used plastic worms in an experiment using bass in fish tanks. They also used plastic shapes of prey the bass normally consumed in the wild. The bass were ten times more likely to attack the earthworms than their normal food source shapes! These were stationary plastic worms, not jiggled to attract the fish. Why they don't know, but worms work!

LIGHT POLLUTION ON NORTH LAKE

We recently heard concerns about the amount of lights being added to docks and waterfronts around the lake, making it more difficult to see the beautiful night sky. We also heard concerns about night boating traffic coming dangerously close to collisions with docks and floats. These two polar opposite views seem to point to an unsolvable problem without offending one or the other's position.

There is a solution. Light fixtures with "hats" or shields can prevent light from radiating upward while still illuminating surfaces or acting as beacons. Please consider these options when lighting your docks or waterfronts.

MICORPS UPDATE

The MICORPS water quality monitoring the NLPA joined seven years ago did not operate last year due to the Governor's line item budget veto. Charlie Taylor, who heads this effort, continued to take secchi disk readings and recorded water temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles. Phosphorus and chlorophyll samples were not taken.

Charlie reported continued improvement in water clarity with the past 7 years being 25% greater than the 1996-2002 period.

FISHY MOTIVES

Mother to daughter: "Feed a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you get rid of him for the whole weekend!"

BOAT PARADE FLOATS ON

Not as many boats participated this year, but the parade wasn't short on fun. The "Hippie" boat led about a dozen boats with a variety of themes. The North Lake Adventure Club boat was loaded with kids who seemed to be on an adventure. The Swamp People fortunately didn't catch up with them! Other boats wore the Red, White & Blue, celebrating Independence Day.

The winning entry was the Hippie Boat, owned by Scott and Kim Broekhuizen. It's good to see our boat parade organizers taking the win! Thanks Scott and Kim.



ROCKET'S RED GLARE

And every other color exploded in a brilliant show over North Lake. Dave Steinbach and his crew filled the sky with amazing sights. So many dazzling flashes filled our eyes, it almost made them tingle!

Thanks Dave and team for this unique experience!

Extra pages in The Laker, but still the same price!

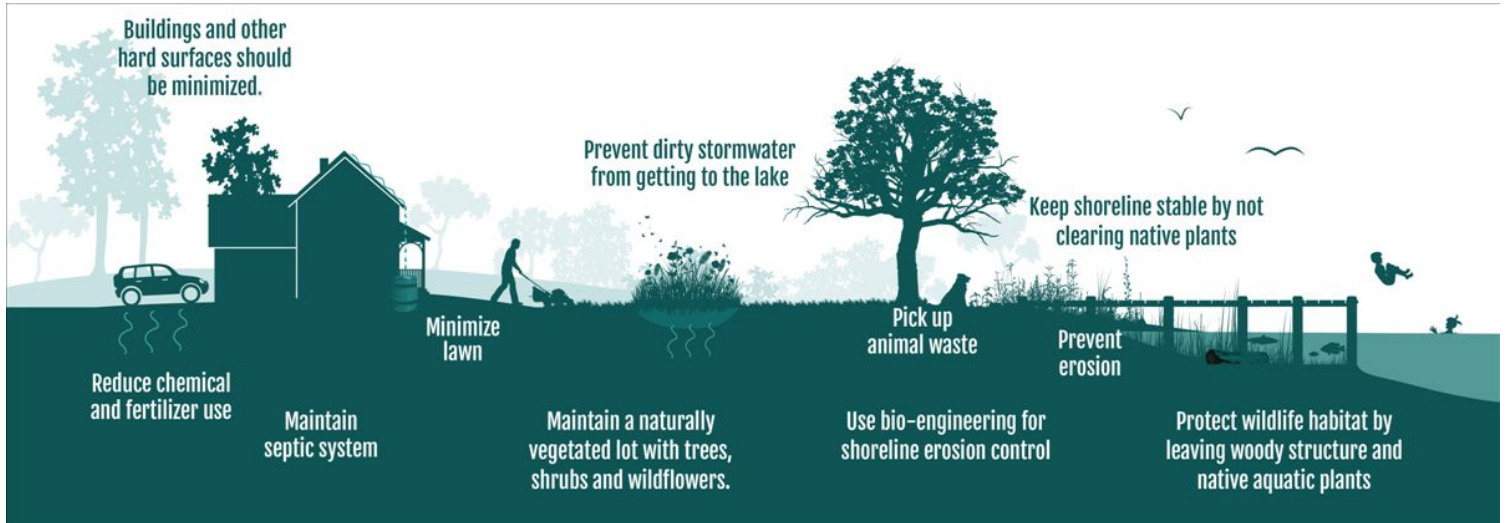
It took more space than I planned this year to get everything included. The Protecting our Lake article, the light pollution article, and the treatment map all were added, as well as a couple of other items. There was too much for our normal six page newsletter! I hope next year we are back to normal.

PROTECTING OUR LAKE

The Michigan Shoreland Stewards organization offers this information on their website aimed at educating shoreland owners on ways to protect their lake.

“Every owner can do something to improve overall management of their property to help their lake. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are actions that you can take to reduce your impact on your shoreland property. Shoreland BMPs help to protect water quality and the lake ecosystem through restoring the natural characteristics and improving problem areas.”

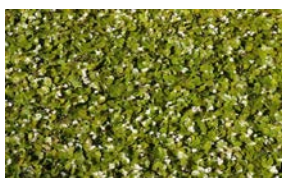
“A well designed shoreland landscape should protect and enhance shoreline and near-shore habitat areas. It can balance lake access, views, and aesthetics with shoreline stabilization and habitat restoration.”



Michigan Invasive Aquatic Plants

There are a dozen or so new invasive aquatic plants that threaten Michigan lakes. It is often confusing and beyond our expertise to correctly identify all of them due to their variety and similarity to our native plants.

Here are three plants fairly easy to recognize: they all have **small white flowers with three petals**. These plants are not found in Michigan yet (or are very limited), but are nearby and can quickly spread to North Lake. If they are found early they can be eradicated. If left to spread in their new surroundings without their natural limiters, they can take over large portions of the lake. Please report any sighting of these plants to any of the NLPA folks listed on page 5.



European Frog-bit

This European native was introduced into the Great Lakes and is now found along the shores of Lakes Huron, Erie, Ontario, and in some Waterloo Recreation Area lakes.



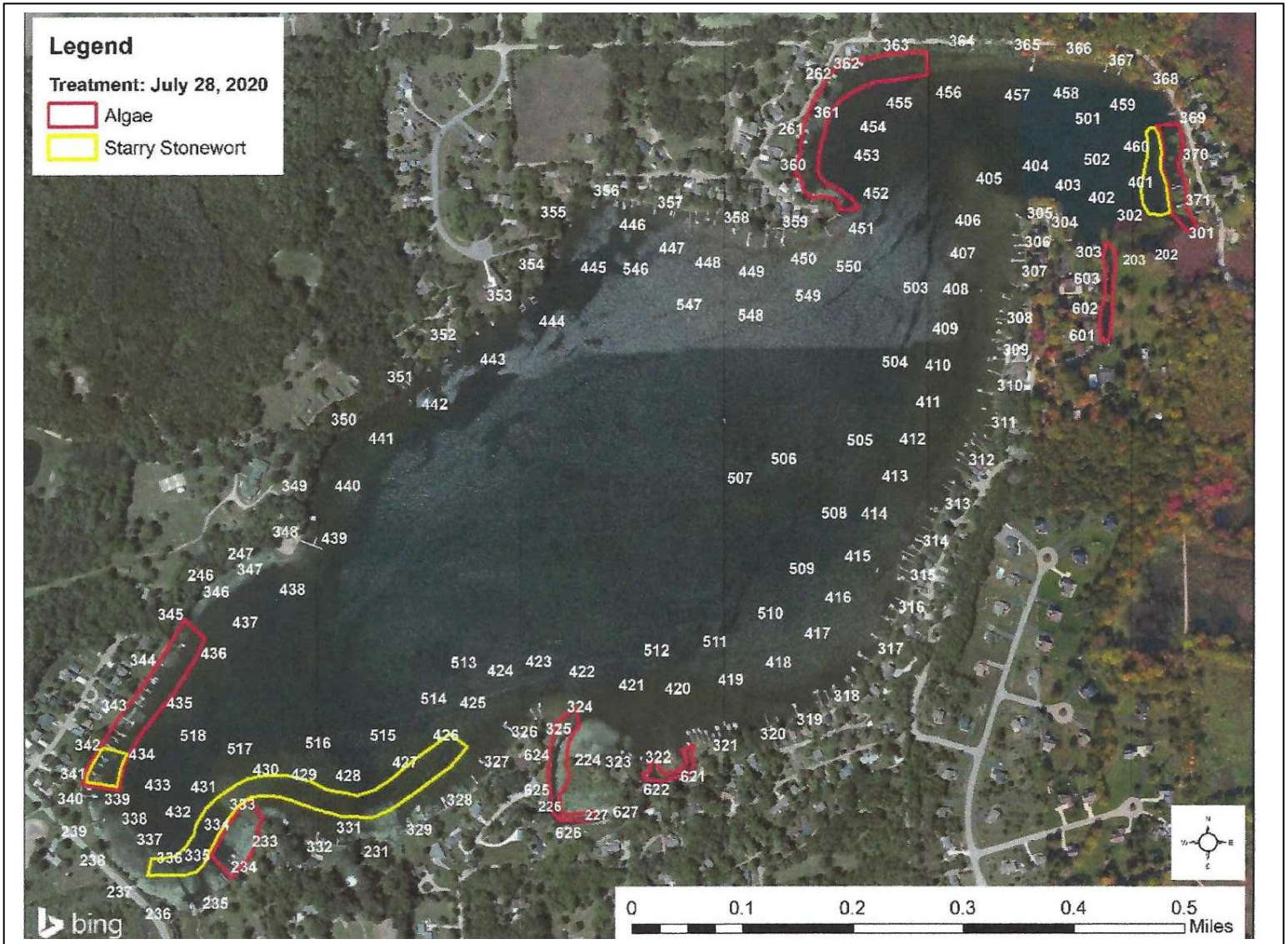
Water Soldier

Native to U.K., Spain, Italy, Bulgaria and Siberia, it has recently been found in parts of Ontario.



Brazilian Water Weed

Native to southern South America, but found in the U.S. primarily in the Southeast and West Coast.



TREATMENT MAP

The above map indicates areas treated for algae and for starry stonewort on July 28, 2020. The three digit numbers are the “addresses” used by the Lake Management Team to identify areas to be treated. In this map, the red outlined areas are algae areas to be treated and the yellow outlined areas are starry stonewort. The center of the lake has no addresses since these are deeper waters where no treatments are typically made.

THANK YOU!!!

Thanks to the NLPA and all who make North Lake the terrific environment we enjoy. A special thanks to Mary Lou, my wife, for her valuable assistance with The Laker.