THE LAKER

NORTH LAKE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION www.northlaker.org AUG. 2024

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

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, September 23, 2024, 7pm

Inverness Club House

AGENDA

1. Review/Approve 2023 Minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Jan Arps-Prundeanu on her own experience on natural shorelines
4. Old Business
   a. SAD Update
   b. Weed/Algae Issues
   c. MICORP Update
5. New Business
6. Election of Officers
7. 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 the email address confidential and only use it for important lake notices.

In 2023 we raised about $2480 in dues to support NLPA operations. This was $480 more than in 2022. In 2023 the average donation was $21.57 115 members contributed in 2023. This represents 45% of the total membership. Thanks for the loyal members who consistently support the NLPA.

MUTE SWAN COUNT

In 2013 the Michigan DNR began a Mute Swan Reduction Program as part of a national effort to reduce the population of this imported species. Part of the reasoning behind this program is to provide opportunities for the native Trumpeter Swans to proliferate. A count is done each year as part of

(Con't. pg. 2, col. 1)

CAMP BURT SHURLY UPDATE

As most of you know, Camp Burt Shurly is closed again this year. Due to funding issues, maintenance problems have developed creating a situation where the camp can no longer acquire an operating permit. Many of the cabins have leaking roofs, which, if unresolved, lead to further damage.

Last year the camp was hoping to secure a funding grant to correct many of the problems, but unfortunately they did not receive the grant.

This year Detroit Public Schools is working with both our senators, Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, to secure earmarks in a congressional appropriations bill for camp renovations. Gary Peters has requested $1,716,140 and Debbie Stabenow has requested $5,092,210. This is a long process and we will not know the outcome right away.

When the camp was operating, Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries had a contract to run the camp and provide maintenance of the grounds. However, when the camp closed only the maintenance portion of the contract was retained and only on a month-to-month basis. Several months ago Detroit Public Schools decided to discontinue even the maintenance contract. Since then the camp grounds have not been maintained and the camp has been vandalized. Most of the buildings have been broken into, damaged, and looted. It appears as if some valuable trees have been harvested from the property.

One of the main issues at the camp is the condition of the camp dock. Not only is it in disrepair and sinking on the outside edge, but the goose droppings are thick all along its surface. This is a serious health hazard to the lake. A single adult goose averages two pounds of feces per day. Geese feces that accumulate on a hard surface and are unable to permeate into the surrounding soil, can contain E.coli along with numerous other bacteria and parasites, especially in warm weather (*gogeesego.com*). I have sent emails, texts, and made phone calls to numerous people at DPS to get the dock removed. So far it has been difficult getting through the DPS bureaucracy. They are presently trying to get an emergency RFP approved to allow funding for the dock removal. DPS has also put the issue of maintenance funding on the October Board of Education agenda. I have offered to recruit volunteers from around the lake to remove the dock, but DPS prefers to have the work done through a contract due to liability issues should someone get hurt.

A law enforcement officer who lives nearby, has noticed what appears to be unlawful activity at the camp and notified authorities. However, their hands are tied because a complaint must be signed by the property owners, who are basically not available. The officer and I have discussed this problem at length. He has requested a larger police presence, but since the camp is in a rural area we cannot expect it to be continuously monitored by law officials. If you see something unusual

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

the Breeding Waterfowl Survey Program in Michigan.

The count in 2013, when the program was initiated, as well as each succeeding year, is listed below (rounded to the nearest hundred):

2013 = 17,500
2014 = 9,100
2015 = 8,700
2016 = 10,000
2017 = 8,100
2018 = 12,000
2019 = 7,900
2020 = no count: covid
2021 = 15,800
2022 = 14,300
2023 = 9,600

From the above, you can see the count fluctuates widely from year to year. The goal of the reduction program is to cut the population to 2000 or less by 2030 and to maintain that limit in the future. It is obvious from the counts that either the counts are inaccurate or factors beyond the DNR's efforts will make reaching the goal a difficult task.◆

LAKE LEVEL

Since the weir was installed at the Hadley Road culvert in 2012, the lake level has been relatively stable. The level has fluctuated within about a one foot elevation change since that time with the highest level occurring in the spring of 2018 and the lowest level in the fall of the same year.

2023 levels were lower than average and 2024 is slightly higher than average through July. On average, the lake loses about six inches of depth between the spring and fall readings, but so far this year the decline is less than normal. ◆

happening on the camp property, please call the Washtenaw County Sheriff's office in Dexter 734-426-0228 and make a report. I am trying to keep a log of these issues, so please inform me as well, 734-678-3588 (Mary Lou Frendt). At the present time I am also working on several other options that may be available. ◆

Mary Lou Frendt, Camp Liaison

WHACK-A-MOLE

Over the years, the NLPA and the North Lake Improvement Project Special Assessment District (SAD) have encountered a challenging and changing array of invasive weeds and problematic algae. The initial problem of eurasian milfoil has gradually diminished in scope, but curly leaf pondweed and starry stonewort arrived and flourishes and ebbs as the years go by. The milfoil and its hybrids have also reappeared in abundance from time to time. Lately, algae has increased and at times made the lake difficult to enjoy. Add to that, more stringent rules of the State of Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) for controlling these problems, and we have fewer options, resulting in less than ideal results.

For example, pondweed growth (native and invasive), was extensive in 2022 and in 2023. Limitations on areas that may be chemically treated prompted harvesting in 2022. Budget restrictions limited the scope of this work in 2022 and eliminated all harvesting in 2023. Lily pad treatment at docks and swim areas was totally eliminated in 2023 and will be for the foreseeable future. Algae treatments in the spring to mid-summer are extremely limited by EGLE and we pretty much have to live with the algae. Fortunately, a good thunderstorm or high winds will often diminish the problem.

We publish tips and warnings every year about minimizing fertilizer and other runoff that may contribute to the algae problem. In an NLPA Board Meeting in April, the question was raised about where algae come from. Charlie Taylor responded in an email quoted below:

"I thought it was a great question: Where does all that floating fiber-like algae come from?

So I did some re-reading of the attached scientific journal article (Vadeboncoeur 2021) that is all about this stuff. This stuff, called filamentous algae (ours is mostly Spirogyra species) starts out in very early Spring attached to rocks and other stuff on the lake bottom (as it certainly has already in most of the shallow parts of N.Lake).

Later in the season (around May), most of the algae stops actively growing and it detaches and floats to the surface. That's when we notice it as a nuisance that gets blown around and piled up by the wind.

The author's best ideas (unproven) for why this stuff is recently much more common in clear freshwater lakes (worldwide, by the way) are:

1) nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen may percolate from groundwater springs up into the lake more than in the past. This may bring nutrients from more distant areas in the lake watershed that are more developed (grass fertilizer, etc) than in the past. This groundwater phosphorus does not show up as dissolved phosphorus in lake water if it is drawn into algae on the lake bottom. So, it can't be easily measured.

(Con't. pg. 3, col. 2)

HYDRILLA FOUND IN MICHIGAN PONDS

An article posted on Michigan.gov on July 5, 2024, reported that In October 2023, hydrilla – one of the world's most invasive aquatic plants – was found in two West Michigan ponds, its first detection in Michigan. Invasive hydrilla can spread easily and quickly in lakes, ponds, and streams. Hydrilla can quickly fill a lake or pond and choke off recreational access.

EGLE's long-term plan is to eradicate hydrilla from the ponds to protect Michigan's waterways from this invader. Herbicide is being used to suppress hydrilla growth while plans are underway to completely dredge the two ponds later this summer. Dredging provides the highest likelihood of eradication in the shortest time period. Though hydrilla can be treated with herbicide, it is difficult to eradicate. Herbicide treatments alone take six to eight years to deplete hydrilla tuber banks.

The low hydrilla abundance found in the ponds suggested that the population was either not flourishing or was recently introduced. Hydrilla's root tubers, buds, and even small plant fragments can develop into new plants, allowing easy dispersal through water or by hitchhiking on boats, gear, or attached to ornamental plants sold for water gardens.

The hydrilla discovery is also an important reminder for boaters and anglers to clean, drain, and dry all watercraft, trailers, and gear to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. (See picture on page 5) ◆

2) groundwater may be getting increased loads of nutrients from dust in particles from air that are carrying nitrogen and phosphorus from suspended smoke.

3) warmer lake water in wintertime and changes in groundwater flow (eg. from increased well water extraction) can change a bunch of things that overall increase filamentous algae. The most likely changes are more sunlight reaching a warmer lake bottom. Both of these would increase algae growth.

4) It is possible that increased water clarity (that we have measured over the last 30 years) directly causes an increase in algae growth both by heating the lake more by penetrating sunlight and also by allowing algae to grow in deeper water.

5) bigger changes in lake water depth from changes in summer heat and rainfall than in previous years may increase submerged spring water flow and therefore increase nutrients in groundwater that are difficult to measure if rapidly utilized by growing algae.

6) zebra mussels and other changes in lake plants and animals may increase water clarity and thus algae growth.

7) there could be a decrease in small organisms that previously ate filamentous algae early in the growing season.

So, there are lots of things that could possibly cause our increased Spring algae mats, and we don't really know which of the above possibilities are most important. "

As I read Charlie's email, I recalled reading an article a couple of years ago that said algae is increasing even in pristine Northern forest lakes with no development nearby. It conjectured that dust blown in (as listed in item 2 in Charlie's email) may be the culprit. No matter what the primary cause is, we can all do our part to make sure we are not adding to the problem. No fertilizing, good plantings on the lakefront, and picking up pet waste.

This spring we found significant infestations of milfoil, especially on the southwest side, and treated those areas. Current plans are to incorporate harvesting (primarily for tall pondweeds) along with treatment of targeted infestations of milfoil, starry stonewart, and other invasives we may encounter. Plans are modified annually, and even during the summer season, to keep our lake the jewel we all enjoy. See *Lake Weed Report* on page 7 for further information

We will continue to deal with one problem or another as our whack-a-mole targets reveal themselves. We are fortunate to have the SAD and dedicated volunteers to wield the mallets! ◆

WOODCHUCKS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Much of the following article is either paraphrased or taken directly from the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine March-April, 2023 edition.

Many consider them pests, unwanted varmints that leave holes in our yards and attack our gardens. Most of us know about their weather forecasting by looking for their shadow on February 2 to see if six more weeks of winter is coming. But many of us don't know much more about these over sized ground squirrels, the woodchuck.

(Con't. pg. 4, col. 1)

(**WOODCHUCKS** – cont from pg 2)

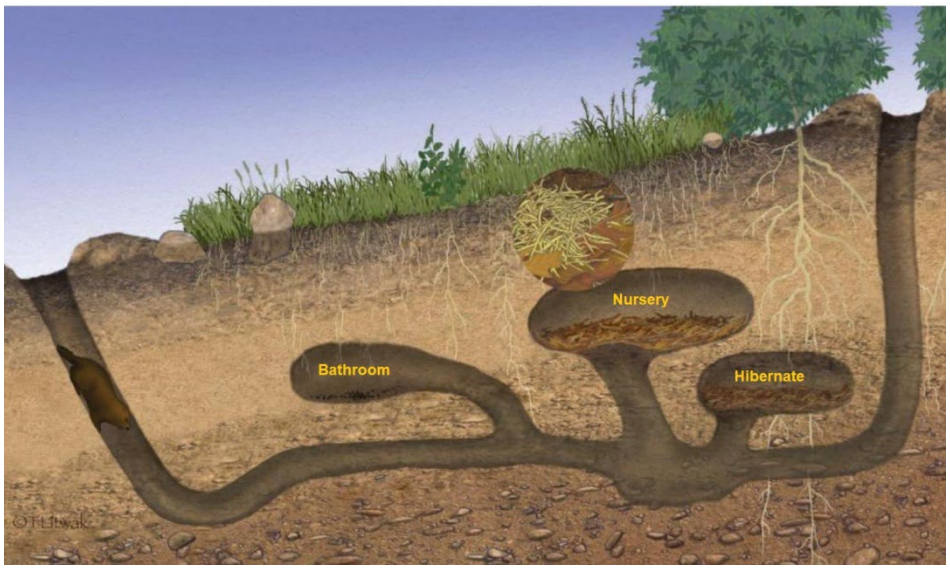
A member of the marmot genus, a branch of the squirrel family, they range from Alaska to Alabama. A woodchuck may weigh up to 15 pounds and be two feet long from its nose to the tip of its short, bushy tail.

Family outing

If you find a hole surrounded by earth and rocks, you may be looking at the front entrance to a woodchuck's home burrow. If you find a hole without soil around it, you may be looking at its back door. Woodchucks use these secret borrows to escape predators such as a fox or coyote. If it is too far from a burrow, it can climb a tree, just like its cousins in the squirrel family.

As subterranean architects, woodchucks follow a basic blueprint for their home burrows. From the front door hole, the entry tunnel slants down about four feet, then curves up a little and then goes horizontal in a long narrow tunnel. The main tunnel is at least 8 feet long but may extend 40 feet or more. Digging upward from the main tunnel, the woodchuck creates three or four passages that lead to individual rooms. One chamber may be used for winter hibernation. Another chamber becomes the nursery, where the female woodchuck makes a nest of dried leaves and grass for her babies. Yet another becomes the bathroom.

Neither you nor predators are likely to find woodchuck droppings above ground. If poop piles up and fills the underground bathroom, the tidy woodchuck seals off the doorway with fresh soil or hauls the droppings outside and buries them. Then it digs a clean bathroom.



Two bedroom flat, one bath. Can you dig it?

Woodchucks spend all summer getting ready for winter, eating dandylions, clover and other plants. They don't store food in their tunnels, they just fatten up for their hibernation. During their long winter sleep, their body temperature drops from 90 to 40 degrees and their heart rate slows from 100 to 4 beats per minute.

They wake up in March and search for a mate. A litter of 3 to 6 kits or chucklings are born in late April or May. They are 4 inches long and weigh 1 ounce, about the weight of a pencil. At six weeks, they are 8 inches long and weigh 8 ounces. They are frisky and follow mom around.

During the summer they are most active early in the day and in the evening to avoid the heat of the day. They keep busy consuming one to one and a half pounds of plants every day.

Science has yet to discover how much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck …well, you know. This may be a good research project for a bored youngster this summer! ◆

MICORP 2023 REPORT

Charlie Taylor collects water samples for phosphorus and chlorophyll-a content, and measures the water clarity, dissolved oxygen and lake temperatures at incremental depths of the lake. The samples and data are collected at the state level and annual reports are generated for each lake and how it compares to other Michigan lakes enrolled in the program. North Lake has remained quite stable over the years and ranks slightly above the state average in overall quality. In 2023, our phosphorus levels declined somewhat and chlorophyll-a increased slightly. The latter can promote algal blooms such as we have experienced in recent years. ◆

DAVE STEINBACH

We lost a great friend and a huge asset to the North Lake community last year, only a month after providing us his most recent fireworks display on North Lake. For more than 25 years, Dave thrilled us with this unique show that few lakes experience.

The following is excerpted from his obituary:

David Blake Steinbach of North Lake, Michigan, age 64, passed away on August 9, 2023 after a courageous battle with cancer. Dave was born on May 5, 1959, in Ann Arbor, Michigan to Ray and Alice (Bregger) Steinbach. He grew up in Chelsea, Michigan, and graduated from Chelsea High School in 1977.

Dave attended Northern Michigan University and then joined the U.S. Navy, where he served as a Nuclear Reactor Operator on the U.S.S. Omaha based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. On September 7, 1984, Dave married the love of his life, Shannon Springer, and while still serving in the Navy, son Sean and daughter Tracy were born.

After leaving the Navy, Dave and Shannon returned to Michigan, and Dave started working at the University of Michigan, where he was employed at the College of Engineering supporting classroom technology for over 34 years. Dave's true passions were family, the outdoors, and University of Michigan sports. He loved anything to do with hunting, fishing, and conservation. Dave was a hunter safety instructor and an active member of the Chelsea Rod and Gun Club, where he served in a number of positions, including president. He also helped start and was an active instructor of the youth shooting group since 2002. Dave also served in many positions of leadership with the local, state, and national chapters of Ducks Unlimited, Inc., where his involvement and contributions will serve the organization for years to come.

Dave loved to entertain, host gatherings, and make others happy. From his famous wild game meals, to fund-raising dinners, to his annual North Lake Fireworks celebration, Dave's gift was bringing people together. One of Dave's favorite places to get away to was Murph's Camp in the Upper Peninsula, where he spent the opening week of deer season for over 30 years. The camp was also the location for relaxing and enjoying time with family and friends throughout the year.

Dave's wife, Shannon, provided the following for the Laker:

"The annual fireworks started many years ago with a few sparklers and roman candles off the dock. Up until last year we never had to use our "rain date" though we likely should have the year we were under a tornado warning but didn't know it. Dave put a small 8ft by 8ft raft in the back bay and lit off small cakes around the rain bursts.

When he joined up with Marty Ehman, the owner of the North Lake store and his friends, the true fireworks shows began. They started with one or two float boats that were stripped down and hand lit 1 ½ to 3 inch shells off the front of the boat and tried to run to the back of the boat before they went up. Many shirts had burn holes and a few hats were knocked off from the mortar launching. Much fun was had and everyone kept all of their fingers and toes.

As things progressed and they started thinking more about safety they took classes, learned a lot and changed over to an electronic firing system. Dave said it was still fun but nothing like the rush you got lighting them by hand. The North Lake fireworks now uses 4 float boats and an electronic system to keep everyone safe and provide a great show. Thank you to all of the people that are working so hard to keep the show going. We enjoyed the wonderful celebration this year." ◆

HYDRILLA PICTURE

(See article on pg. 3, col. 1)

NLPA BOARD MEMBERS

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Webb's Landing: Dave Pruess

Note: For the past five years Mary Lou Frendt has served as our NLPA Liaison to the Detroit Board of Education for issues regarding Camp Burt Shurly. **Please email any queries or concerns regarding the camp to her at mlfrendt@aol.com.**

THANK YOU!

Thanks to the folks who contributed to the Laker publication, especially Shannon Steinbach, David Steinhauer, Dean Boote, Dave Pruess, Paul Lammers and to Mary Lou for her great help in formatting, editing and just all-around expertise.

GOT WORMS?

Little Eddy and his mom were digging for fishing bait in the garden. Uncovering a many-legged creature, Eddy proudly dangled it before his mom.

"No, honey, it won't do for bait," she said. "It's not an earthworm."

"It's not?" Eddy asked, his eyes wide. "What planet is it from?"

KAISER & ASSOCIATES NORTH LAKE 2023 REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY- December 15, 2023

Kieser & Associates, LLC (K&A) conducted vegetation monitoring on North Lake (Washtenaw County, MI) during the summer of 2023 using LakeScanTM assessment methods. The purpose of these efforts was to assess aquatic vegetation during the summer recreational season in the context of nuisance conditions and management needs/outcomes. Results of 2023 show that North Lake met half of its management goals, but fell short on others (Table ES-1).

The June 2023 early-season survey noted the most common native species included chara, native pondweeds, and white waterlilies. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) noted in June included Eurasian watermilfoil and hybrids (EWM), limited sightings of curly-leaf pondweed, and starry stonewort. By August, the most prevalent natives include chara, wild celery, variable pondweed, and broadleaf pondweed. Both starry stonewort and EWM were observed in the late-season survey. EWM was diminished following treatment.

While starry stonewort increased in cumulative coverage over the summer, it was mainly documented on the bottom of the lake and did not present a recreational nuisance in 2023. It should be watched closely in subsequent years and may warrant a treatment at a later date if it becomes a nuisance. Water quality samples revealed that North Lake is trending towards mesotrophic conditions. Looking at the 5-year trend, all three major invasive aquatic species (EWM, starry stonework and curly-leaf pondweed) have shown stable to slightly decreasing trends.

While starry showed increased coverage compared to 2022, it was documented to be intermingled with other species and was not reaching the surface of the lake. Both EWM and curly-leaf pondweed have shown coverages below 5% since 2019 with fairly consistent declines since then. Management in 2024, should be ready to adapt to starry stonewort if nuisance conditions develop for this AIS.

Table ES-1

LakeScan Metric	2023 Average	Management Goal
Species Richness	18	n/a
Shannon Biodiversity Index	7.2	>8.6
Shannon Morphology Index	4.5	> 6.1
Floristic Quality Index	23.5	> 20
Recreational Nuisance Presence	6%	< 10%
Algae Bloom Risk	Moderate	Low

Definitions:

Species Richness – the number of aquatic plant species present in the lake
Shannon Biodiversity Index – plant community's stability and diversity
Shannon Morphology Index – fish and macro-invertebrate habitat quality
Floristic Quality Index – ratio of desirable versus undesirable aquaticplant species
Recreational Nuisance Presence – percentage of survey sites that identified aquatic plants inhibiting recreational activities.
Algal Bloom Risk – risk level based on the characteristics of the lake's watershed ◆

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!
HOW THE FIREWORKS EVENT WAS SAVED

Wow! What a tribute to the legacy of Dave Steinbach. The stunning display we enjoyed on the Saturday after July 4th was a result of many dedicated people contributing many long hours. Roadblocks that at first looked routine became major obstacles, but a dedicated team overcame them all.

It started at the end of February this year when Shannon Steinbach reached out to the NLPA to get a notice out to folks around the lake, that no fireworks event would happen unless someone stepped up to take on the task that Dave had done for many years. Within a few days, a group had emerged and met with Shannon to get her information and start the ball rolling. Shannon provided copies of permits and purchase orders which were a huge asset to the team. Dave Steinhauer, who spearheaded the effort, along with Scott Frisinger, Dean Boote and "Ducky" Dettling became the core team. Ducky was especially instrumental in assisting with the permitting and approvals process. He also introduced the team to "Blast", a Dexter firm who provide professional services, including fireworks displays, for over 20 years. A brother and sister duo, Ryan and Julie Nixon run the firm and turned out to be indispensable to putting on this year's show.

David Steinhauer led the group and worked closely with Ducky Dettling and Blast to contract with them. He also coordinated the collection of donations and funded expenses through his and his brother Matt's Insurance Agency. He was the primary organizer of the NLFWLLC and is effectively its president.

It all starts with certification by the ATF. Without it, you can't purchase or transport commercial fireworks. Dean obtained certification on his own initiative (Dave Steinhauer is currently working on becoming certified). Other legal requirements included an approval letter from the Dexter Fire Authority which had to be presented to the Washtenaw County Sherriff. A permit from the Detroit office of the DNR was required and they required a permit from Dexter Township before they would issue the permit. Dexter Township required a permit from the DNR before they would issue their permit! It all was straightened out once the entities knew Blast was involved (based on their previous experience with Blast.)

The final permit from Dexter Township was received in late June, leaving little time for fund raising and doing all the prep work for the show. Some pre-wiring work was done at Dean's house with a group that included Blast people. Work had to be done on the barges, replacing $5,000 worth of fiberglass rocket tubes and reorienting some of them. A Blast employee took a complete list of the fireworks and programmed the rockets' firing sequence.

On the day of the event (July 6th), the four barges had to be completely wired, transported to the launch and positioned for the show. From 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, up to twelve people worked feverously to complete the wiring. Dave Steinhauer remarked it was incomprehensible how Dave Steinbach had accomplished all this work with very little assistance.

The show started with a single rocket that was followed a few minutes later with another single rocket. These were "wind test" shots. At 10:10pm (a time Julie Nixon said is the perfect time) Dean pushed one button and the whole show thrilled us all.

(Con't. pg. 8, col. 2)

WASH YOUR BOAT!

If you take your boat to another lake, *PLEASE* wash it thoroughly before putting it back in North Lake. Other lakes in Michigan and beyond have invasive zebra mussels, quagga mussels, crayfish and weeds that can cost us dearly in the quality of our lake and in the money it takes to fight it. In some cases it's a lost cause once the invader gets a foothold. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! ◆

The financial side of the event was also a success. In addition to the $5,000 cost for new tubes, the fireworks themselves cost $12 to $13 thousand and the Blast services about $10,000. The total was about $28,000. Shannon and Dave had accumulated a "nest egg" of around $16,000 and another $16,500 was donated to the cause. That leaves about $5,000 toward next year's show.

More tubes will have to be replaced next year, roughly $5,000. If a similar show is provided, roughly $13,000 for fireworks plus $5,000 for Blast, will be spent. That's a total of $23,000, and results in a $2,000 to $3,000 shortfall in 2025. If you didn't get a chance to contribute this year, you can still do so with a check to North Lake Fireworks and mail it to:

North Lake Fireworks
115 Park St.
Chelsea, MI 48118

Thanks to the team who took on this challenge and hit it out of the park! Dave Steinbach was truly honored. ◆

LAKE WEED REPORT By Paul Lammers and Dave Pruess

Contrary to the last few years, the shores of North Lake did NOT have a huge accumulation of floating algae in the spring of 2024. There was however, a modest amount of floating and underwater algae which did not impede boat travel or other activities on the lake.

Eurasian Milfoil continues to plague us. In most cases, there were scattered strands around the lake but a large amount of dense milfoil had surfaced in May and early June on the southwest portion of the lake. This possibly could have been impacted by not treating those weeds in the fall of last year. On May 29, our applicator treated 37.9 acres for milfoil, elodea, and some pondweed.

As of the end of July, we still do not have any significant amount of weed growth or infestations that are usually present in the later part of summer. There is concern about native pondweed patches surfacing on the lake affecting boat travel. Our plan is to keep observing North Lake for starry stonewort and native pondweed growth which is anticipated soon. This may be treated as needed at that time.

There is also a plan to harvest a modest amount of native weeds that usually grow near the shore in the boat traffic areas. Overall, the weed condition on North Lake is quite favorable at this time. If there is excessive weed growth noted at your lakefront, please let the weed inspection team know. ◆