2017 Summer Edition

Lee Lake News

Lee Lake Association Update and Survey Request

Our Mission:

The Lee Lake Association is a group of volunteers that pledges to work together to protect and enhance the quality of the water, the aquatic environment, the fishery and the wildlife of Lee Lake and its surrounding watershed. We are a community committed to preserving the health of our lake for present and future generations.

We pledge to keep our neighbors informed of developments that will impact our lake community. To promote activities within our lake community that will offer the opportunity for all neighbors to get involved.

The Board Report

We continue to work on building a culture that focuses its effort on education and community involvement. Our goal is to get all residents from around the lake to participate and work together to protect our lake's natural resources.

As you may know, the Lee Lake Association has paid for and conducted several lake surveys completed over a series of years. The results of those surveys are posted on our lake association website. For more detailed information go to: www.leelakemi.com. The results of those surveys disclosed three primary invasive aquatic plants that are growing within and around Lee Lake. An invasive species is one that is *not native* and whose introduction *causes harm*. These invasive plants are currently creating problems for boaters and have had a negative impact on our lake. The Milfoil has grown to the degree that it is clogging boat propellers as they leave from the shoreline to approximately thirty feet out from shore. Phragmites continue to spread, blocking lake views and access to the waters edge. Purple Loosestrife is also found around the shoreline but is less harmful.

After over a year of working within the lake association we have finalized a treatment option based on the recommendation and approval of those residents attending the meetings, for a natural treatment (non-chemical) identified as: Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting commonly known as DASH that addresses the invasive aquatic species which are underwater invading our lake.

From the beginning our main objective during this process is to present a proposal to our lake community that will receive overwhelming support. The Lee Lake Association Officers and Board of Directors have met and had further discussions on treating the invasive weeds. We decided it's in our best interest, as property owners, to create a treatment plan to address both the Phragmites and the Milfoil. We continue to develop additional knowledge and recognize if we don't treat both, the problem we have will continue to have a negative impact on our lake quality.

At the Lee Lake Association meeting held on July 18th, the members present asked that we develop a survey to determine our future pathway for treatment. We have two possible routes for treatment:

1. This option is to continue with a petition that if passed could begin the legal process of creating a Pubic Act P.A. 188 assessment district governed by the Newton Township Board. With this option, the Newton Township Board would decide the treatment district, type of treatment, hire the treating companies, hire consulting firm to manage and monitor treatment programs and set treatment costs and assessment fees to collect and pay for treatment. This process provides for public comments and feedback prior to the governmental board making all decisions moving forward. During the last meeting, the Lee Lake Association members have expressed this option as less desirable and prefer Lee Lake residence independence and autonomy.
2. The second option is to create a voluntary treating district governed by the Lee Lake Association (LLA). This treatment district would be voluntary with proposed caps on treatment payments. The LLA board would be responsible to perform all the obligations required including hiring a contractor to manually harvest invasive aquatic plants that are underwater and contract with our current lake management partner Restorative Lake Sciences. Funds would be collected by the LLA treasurer and disbursed as directed by contract with LLA board approval. LLA board would have open dialogue with the Newton Township board in efforts to understand and realize common goals for the good of the lake and property owners.

Whatever pathway is decided we must determine the following information so all involved have a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished. This includes the following key areas:

Types of Treatment:

- Milfoil: DASH treatment only (natural)
- Phragmites: Herbicide (spray or wipe)
- Purple Loosestrife: None (can be managed by homeowner)

Assessment District: TBD

Length of Assessment: 3- 5 years and yearly evaluations prior to funding the next year.

Cost of Assessment for treatment: $200 lake front lots, $100 lake access lots and use of the lake, back lots $50.

We have worked diligently during this process to educate our lake community. The LLA is grateful of the efforts of every lake resident who volunteered their time during this process. Our Lake Association is only as strong as its members who are willing to be involved.

We need to ask ourselves. If we do nothing what will happen to our lake?

- The invasive weeds could continue to spread.
- We could lose our treatment options.
- Lead to lake residents having to treat within their riparian (lake frontage) rights.
- Ultimately it could have a negative effect on our property values.

The LLA Board believes that passing a non-chemical treatment as outlined in option 2 is the first step in protecting our lake for future generations. The treatment plan reflects our commitment to our mission statement, to protect and enhance the quality of the water, the aquatic environment, the fishery and the wildlife of Lee Lake and its surrounding watershed.

In closing
The LLA Board has taken every necessary step to ensure this survey will represent the voice of the lake community. We now have the chance to stand together as one, and support future direction for treatment of our lake.

Please fill out the survey and return it within 5 days to one of the representatives listed below. If you have any questions please call or contact a lake association representative listed below.

I drive:
Mike Kile: 269 979-1558

Clark Road:
Mike Grenon: 269 589-6689
Tom & Victoria Unger: 269 979-2055

Lauralee Lane:
Duane Packer: 269 209-6617

Lakeside Drive:
Mark Casebeer: 269 274-6975
Diane Vitale: 269 967-1974
Jim Dickerson: 269 979-8813

Lee Lake Survey Questions

1. How long have you resided at Lee Lake? _____
2. Are you aware of visual changes with invasive aquatic weeds? YES ☐ NO ☐
3. Do you want to proceed with a Pubic Act 188 petition and have Newton Township control treatment type, the lake engineering plan and all costs for the lake? YES ☐ NO ☐
4. Would you want to proceed with a voluntary treatment control project at the control and administration of our Lee Lake Association? YES ☐ NO ☐
5. Would you voluntary commit to supporting funding for treatment? YES ☐ NO ☐

   If yes, how would you like to pay: Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Yearly ☐ (Check One)
6. Would you agree to the following voluntary payment structure? YES ☐ NO ☐

   Lake front owners pay treatment fee per year at $200
   Lake access users having access and using the lake pay treatment fee of $100
   Lots across from the lake pay treatment fee of $50
   Those owning more than one parcel in the treating district pay only for one at the highest treatment fee based on the type of land they own.

If you are not interested in voluntary monetary contribution are you willing to help with fundraising events to offset the costs? YES ☐ NO ☐

COMMENTS:

Optional:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Please fill out the survey and return it within 5 days.

Invasive Plant Identification

Latest data (Sept. 2016) of Lee Lake.

Eurasian Milfoil - 9.0 acres (Yellow)
Phragmites - 3.5 (Brown)

Eurasian Milfoil

Eurasian Milfoil is an attractive plant with feathery underwater foliage was introduced to North America many years ago and is now found over much of the United States. Once milfoil becomes well-established within a waterbody, it is difficult or impossible to remove.

Lee Lake is a deep basin lake which keeps the Milfoil concentrated along the outer edges surrounding the lake. Controlling the milfoil is essential to the health of our lake. If left unchecked the milfoil will choke out the natural lake weeds and continue to fill in around the lake. Boat propellers will chop up the Milfoil and spread it further throughout the lake. We have options available (DASH) now but if we continue to ignore the problem then our only option might end up being a chemical treatment program.

Purple Loosestrife

Purple loosestrife thrives along roadsides and in wetlands. While seeds can germinate in water, establishment is much more successful in moist substrate that's not flooded. It prefers full sun, but can tolerate shade.

Lee Lake has a very small amount of Purple Loosestrife and can be manually treated by homeowners.

Phragmites

Non-native invasive Phragmites affect waterfront owner property values and related local ecosystems. Invasive plants harm property values and ecosystems by damaging infrastructure and limiting access to water and recreation.

Photo One
Shows how dense the Phragmites stands become.

Photo Two
This picture shows how the Phragmites have spread along the East side of the lake extending all the way around to J Drive.

Notice how they have started to consume the inland lake front property.

Photo Three
This picture shows a dense stand of Phragmites blocking the lake view of a lake front property owner.

Photo Four
This picture shows the regrowth of a dense stand of Phragmites after manually cutting them below the water level. Phragmites were cut approximately 3 weeks prior to picture.

Studies have shown some natural methods of controlling Phragmites can be effective. Flooding and manual digging for small areas can work but for large dense stands a local herbicide treatment is recommended.

Photo Five
This picture shows how Phragmites have started to spread along the wet land area on Laura Lee Lane.

Phragmites will continue to spread along the shoreline and continue to grow inland as the wet land is conducive to the spread of Phragmites. They choke out the natural plant life and can eliminate habit for wildlife.