



The GLQO Watershed Journal

The mission of the Gull Lake Quality Organization is to address concerns and provide education regarding the use of natural resources of the Gull Lake Watershed.

Volume 3, Issue 1

www.glqo.net

Jan.—March, 2009

Upcoming Events

February, 2009

18th - Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

April, 2009

1st - Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

22nd - Super Soil Saturday,
Soil Testing at the Richland Hardware
9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

May, 2009

13th - Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

June, 2009

24th - Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

July, 2009

Mark Your Calendars!
22nd - Annual & Board Meeting,
7:00 p.m., check website for location

Sept. 2009

2nd—Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

Oct. 2009

14th—Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

Nov. 2009

18th—Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

Dec. 2009

30th—Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
Check website for location

Time for 2009 Membership Dues!!

We have included a membership application at the end of the newsletter and enclosed a pre-addressed return envelope for your convenience.

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GLQO HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH GOOD PEOPLE

We have been blessed to have had Pete Knibloe and Rick Newell serve as members of our Board of Directors. Although their terms of service have ended, we will continue to benefit from their contributions. Thanks Pete and Rick!

GLQO WELCOMES FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Please join with us in welcoming our new Board Members: Anne Couture and Denny Lyne. We look forward to the value that these new members will bring to the Board. Thank you to Anne and Denny for agreeing to commit your time and energy to shaping and achieving the goals and objectives of the GLQO.

Partner Spotlight—SWMLC Celebrates Success

By Emily Wilke, Land Protection Specialist, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

In the last GLQO newsletter, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) announced the awarding of a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality \$500,000 matching grant to SWMLC as part of a partnership with the GLQO to conserve land at the headwaters of Gull Lake for protection of water quality and wildlife habitat.

Now we are happy to announce that SWMLC has completed two projects to meet this goal. To date approximately 73 acres have been protected through conservation easements! Please join us in thanking the James family for conserving their 13 acres of land with 400 feet of frontage on Prairieville Creek and the Boudeman and Vander Molen families for conserving their 60-acre property with 2,300 feet of frontage on Prairieville Creek and Mud Lake.

We thank these forward-thinking families for their role in protecting the water quality of Gull Lake for years to come. Stay tuned to future issues of this newsletter to hear about additional land being conserved along Prairieville Creek in the coming year. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about how you can conserve your property, call Emily Wilke at the SWMLC office, (269) 324-1600.

Announcing the 2009 Lake and Stream Leaders Institute

Make Plans to Be a Part of This Year's Class!

Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Inc. (MLSA) and Michigan State University (MSU), with generous support from the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited, are organizing the Lake and Stream Leaders Institute "Class of 2009". This will be the fourth session of this popular program, which is typically held every other year. The Institute provides an educational experience that improves participants' understanding of local water resource management planning and program implementation. **Past participants have included property owners, concerned citizens, drain commissioners, organization representatives and state and local government personnel.**

Applications are currently being accepted for the Institute's Class of 2009!

The Institute is conducted in five in-depth sessions that include classroom learning and field experience and practice. The first seminar session will be held at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center on Higgins Lake on Saturday, May 16, 2009. The next three sessions are held on July 30, 31, and August 1, 2009 at Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) near Kalamazoo. Meals and lodging at KBS are provided as part of the registration fee. The last session and graduation dinner will be held at the Bengel Wildlife Center in Bath, north of Lansing, on Friday, October 2, 2009.

If your application is accepted, the registration fee will be \$250 (\$150 for full-time students). Additionally, participants pay their own travel cost to attend the sessions and should anticipate some expenses for their chosen applied project.

Application forms and more information on the Institute, including a preliminary agenda, are available at Institute web site (www.msue.msu.edu/waterqual/lakeleaders.html) or the MLSA web site (www.mlswa.org). It is to the applicant's advantage to apply early, as participation is limited to a maximum of 30 individuals. Questions? Contact Jo Latimore at latimor1@msu.edu, or 517-432-1491.

Expanded Monitoring Efforts in Gull Lake Watershed

By: *Chris Tracy*

GLQO has partnered with many individuals and organizations to monitor water quality and related matters in the Gull Lake watershed. These partners have included, among others:

- * The Four Townships Water Resource Council (FTWRC)
- * Kellogg Biological Station (Dr. Steve Hamilton in particular)
- * Steve Allen
- * The County of Kalamazoo

Different types of monitoring and testing have been done over the years, at different locations throughout the Gull Lake Watershed. For example, Kalamazoo County with monetary support from GLQO and FTWRC, has expanded its testing for E. Coli to include Prairieville and Augusta Creeks. In addition, Steve Hamilton and Steve Allen have taken samples and done testing at various locations for a number of years to obtain data regarding nitrogen and phosphorous levels.

What has been missing around all these monitoring efforts to date has been a comprehensive overall plan. To this end, the GLQO has retained the services of environmental consulting firm Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr and Huber, Inc. (Fishbeck) to address that missing piece. Jim Brode, a hydrogeologist with Fishbeck, will oversee this effort and will be working closely with GLQO, FTWRC, KBS and others. The ultimate goal will be to put a comprehensive monitoring program in place for the Gull Lake Watershed. Jim Brode will provide updates and recommendations to GLQO and FTWRC once some of the initial data gathering and related work is done. Jim also plans to provide written summaries and status reports to GLQO and we will plan to publish those reports (or at the least, an executive summary) in future newsletters and on the GLQO website (www.glqo.net). Working with Fishbeck, the plan also will involve making as much testing data (historical and current) available on our website.

At this stage, most of the efforts will involve data gathering and creation of a plan of action to monitor surface water. The overall plan and recommendations from Fishbeck also may include efforts with respect to monitoring Watershed groundwater and air quality. Fishbeck's recommendations as to which compounds are tested for also will take into consideration the cost of performing these tests. Fishbeck has significant experience in working with groups like GLQO to obtain grant funding to help support these efforts. FTWRC also has a great deal of experience with obtaining grants and the two groups will work together on this initiative. Of course, continued assistance and cooperation from local units of government, including the townships and counties in the watershed, will also be key. Furthermore, assistance from local property owners will be critical. GLQO already has taken steps, and will continue to do so, to work with the townships, counties and local citizens. The monitoring data that is collected will be shared with everyone.

In addition, GLQO has formed a new committee specifically focused on Financial Development. GLQO Board member Martina Johnson is heading up this committee and plans will be made to increase GLQO's fundraising abilities to align with the grant activities discussed above. An ongoing and comprehensive monitoring program in the watershed will require substantial annual funding.

In the very near future, the GLQO and Fishbeck will be contacting a variety of local organizations that may have relevant water quality data. If you have -- or know of a local group that has -- historical water quality data for some piece of the Gull Lake Watershed, please let us know!!

This effort to expand the monitoring program is in its early stages at this time, but GLQO is confident that working with Fishbeck, its other partners and the local community will show great results and will allow us to achieve a goal we all share in common -- namely to maintain, and where possible, to improve, the quality of the environment around us. This is a great place to live and work and we want to keep it that way for generations to come.

CAFOs and Environmental Stewardship

By: *Bastiaan De Jong*

Environmental Stewardship: *The responsibility for environmental quality shared by all those whose actions affect the environment [US Environmental Protection Agency].*

It's one thing for animal operators and farmers (including CAFOs) to adhere to the 'letter of the law.' In addition to the rule of law, however, many farmers have taken it upon themselves to follow even stricter, self-imposed standards when it comes to operating and owning land and a dairy facility. Bastiaan de Jong, one of the newest members of the GLQO Board, is one such operator.

Bastiaan grew up in California working on a 1200 cow family farm where he started feeding calves before and after school. His family has always adhered to a sustainability philosophy with a biblical basis. He came to this area in 2000 from Middleville, Michigan. He worked for a dairy there for 2 years prior to renting the Lockshore Farm from Jim Fish. Jim's wish was that whoever owned the farm would not bring any development to the land. This was not the law, but "it was something important to Jim and that has become very important to us as well."

Jim's farm had been in his family since early 1950s and it was clear that he embodied the spirit of what is now commonly called Environmental Stewardship. This, to Bastiaan, means that agriculture can coexist with residents, development, and the natural environment, but that requires more than just what the law requires.

According to Bastiaan, Stewardship means:

...keeping farm ground for agricultural purposes and not to build houses or parking lots.

...planting some type of cover crop on the field to minimize soil erosion and runoff. We work with an agronomist to build up soils and improve soil 'tillability', worm life, etc.

...providing a healthy environment on a new facility. To achieve this we met with veterinarians and other consultants to create an environment that was geared toward cow comfort and employee safety.

...creating containment ponds for animal waste that will hold more than the required 6 month's storage.

...becoming a "Category 1" CAFO. Some consider animal waste odor simply a nuisance, but we see this as a significant issue for our neighbors. Therefore we have planted trees sporadically around the new expansion and will continue to plant more in the future. We work very closely with an agronomist to keep the soils balanced and healthy for plant life.

...helping to educate others by being involved in community activities and making people aware of the process it takes to deliver a healthy food product to the consumer.

In his own words: *"Changes are inevitable because of changes in environmental regulations and increase in population resulting in increased costs to the farmer. We are here to sustain the family farm. Development. Housing. Agriculture. Local economy. The environment. We are a community and we truly feel we need to work together. We truly can, if we look not to what we're made to do, but what the right thing is to do.*

That's Stewardship, and that's where we're choosing to hang our hat."

From the President's Desk

By: *Brian Winne*

These are tough economic times. The news just doesn't seem to improve. Some days it's hard just to keep going, but we must. We must keep going for ourselves and our families and for the benefit of our children's children. We must maintain our efforts to preserve and protect our natural resources for them. The Gull Lake Watershed is the jewel of southwest Michigan, and as residents within the watershed we are charged with the responsibility to preserve and protect it for future generations. All residents and businesses working together, collaboratively, as a team, is the key. We must be good stewards. We cannot expect someone else to do the work for us. We must stay the course.

The Gull Lake Quality Organization has for many years worked hard as a catalyst for action and an organizer of stakeholders for the common purpose of preserving the water quality and the quality of life in the Gull Lake area. Over the past year the GLQO Board has been very successful through the efforts of its intelligent, energetic members who have thoughtfully expressed their opinions and moved the GLQO forward in achieving its goals and living up to its mission. This fall, two Board members resigned to pursue focused agendas related to the health and welfare of Gull Lake riparians specifically. Their thoughtfulness and enthusiasm were clearly assets on the GLQO Board during their tenure. We wish Pete Knibloe and Rick Newell all the best wherever their paths lead them. They will be missed on the Board, but I am sure that we all will continue to benefit from their personal pursuit of their ideals in some fashion. At the same time, we are quite pleased and proud to announce the addition of two new members to the Board: Denny Lyne and Anne Couture. Both are long time Gull Lake riparians. The skills, knowledge and intensity that they bring to the Board is amazing. We are truly blessed to have these sincere, conscientious individuals on the GLQO Board.

Looking forward to 2009, we are continuing several initiatives and starting some new, including:

- LSL Study – We are continuing to work with the consultants from LSL Planning. With their assistance, we have met with the township (and several county) officials and have analyzed their respective zoning ordinances and Master Plans. The focus of the study has been on those ordinances intended to protect the water quality within each township. To date, the study has revealed that the townships already employ many of the standard water quality practices used throughout the state and that the Master Plans generally address the importance of protecting the rural character and environmental features of the area. We are now ready to take the next step with the township officials. We have defined processes to assist in “harmonizing” these laws and ordinances across these governmental jurisdictions. By helping to establish greater consistency, we hope to lessen the burden of administration and to improve overall effectiveness. We will be meeting with township officials several times over the coming weeks to meet this goal.
- FTC&H Strategic Plan – We are commencing a new project to review available historic data regarding water quality within the Gull Lake Watershed and to formulate a strategy for integrating the existing data and research programs with new testing programs to create a comprehensive “sentinel” water quality monitoring program. The new sentinel program, once implemented, will isolate problem areas and provide an early warning to facilitate the rapid implementation issue mitigating actions.
- We are continuing our on-going initiatives, such as the marine patrol, access and development assessment, shoreline restoration, and education.

We are only limited by our imagination, time ... and funding.

All of the efforts and work performed by the GLQO Board members is totally voluntary and unpaid. Our accomplishments are the sole result of dedicated individuals who are willing to sacrifice their time to pursue what we all consider worthwhile initiatives for the benefit of all those living and working in the Gull Lake Watershed. But, time and dedication are not enough. It takes funding as well. Please consider increasing your financial support of the Gull Lake Quality Organization. I assure you that the funds contributed to the GLQO will be put to excellent use by dedicated and conscientious people working to preserve and protect this wonderful “jewel” of southwest Michigan – the Gull Lake Watershed.

Historian's Corner

By: *Eric Reid (historian@glqo.net)*



In the midst of a particularly harsh Winter season, Your Historian has come across some aerial photographs from June, 1960. Take a look at this composite of the six original images, and see if you can spot differences from the present-day Gull Lake area. Look for the original six images soon on the GLQO website at www.glqo.net.



Growing up in the Gull Vista plat south of the Country Club, I note the change in that area. What was a few years before a golf course, was in 1960 becoming farmland, developments and an apple orchard. That treeless expanse of 1960 has become heavily wooded, and Gull Vista has gone from dirt roads and 3 houses to a mature neighborhood. Those with keen eyes will note that Merrimac Ave in the plat was not yet extended to its current length.

This photo isn't detailed enough to show bygone landmarks, such as the general store in Yorkville, the gasoline pumps at Mac's Garage or the Bait Shop near on M-89 near the Channel.

Summary—Articles of Interest From Other Publications

By: *Eric Reid*

Zebra Mussels and Blue-Green Algae Related?

from the November, 2008 *Riparian Magazine*

We're all familiar with those sharp little zebra mussels in Gull Lake. In addition, many of us have seen 'blooms' or 'slicks' of blue-green algae on the water's surface in late summer. What you may not know is that these two very different organisms may be related. Anecdotal evidence suggests that blue-green algae blooms (which have the potential to be extremely toxic to humans and animals) are on the increase in recent years. Research begun in 2004 (and originally detailed in the Spring 2004 issue of *Futures*) seeks to demonstrate if indeed this increase may be due to the introduction of zebra mussels to Gull Lake in the past few decades. Initial results suggest a link, but more study is required.

Adding Climate Change To the Mix

from the *NOAA Climate Impacts on Great Lakes Ecosystems Workshop*, Ann Arbor, July 2008

Research conducted on Gull Lake in the past couple of years posits a further connection - that warmer summer temperatures decrease the zebra mussel population, but **increase** the likelihood of blue-green algae blooms. Other planktons and algae seems to be declining in general, leading to diminished fishery populations - this too **may** be tied to Global Warming, but no conclusive evidence yet exists.

Gull Lake Quality Organization

2009 Dues Request

The mission of the Gull Lake Quality Organization is to address concerns and provide education regarding the use of natural resources of the Gull Lake Watershed.

Please take a moment to provide your contact information below and ...

THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!!

(Please print all information and provide your local mailing address)

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

It is not our policy to share your home address information, phone numbers or E-mail address with any other individuals or organizations. However, we do normally publish the names (only) our members on our website.

Check here if you do not wish to have your name published on the GLQO website.

Check here if you would like to receive The GLQO Watershed Journal by email.

Individual/Family Membership

___ Regular (\$25) \$ _____

___ Supporting (\$50 to \$100) \$ _____

___ Sponsor (\$125 & Over) \$ _____

Corporate Membership

___ Silver (\$50) \$ _____

___ Gold (\$100 to \$200) \$ _____

___ Platinum (\$250 & Over) \$ _____

Additional Donations:

___ General Donation \$ _____

___ Sheriff's Patrol \$ _____

Additional Donations:

___ General Donation \$ _____

___ Sheriff's Patrol \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Check here if you wish to have your donation level kept confidential.

Please mail this form and your check to: GLQO, P.O. Box 34, Hickory Corners, MI 49060

If you have comments or suggestions we would like to hear from you!!

Please visit our website: <http://www.glqo.net>

Hickory Corners, MI 49060
P.O. Box 34
GLOO

The Gull Lake Quality Organization's Board of Directors

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