

THE GLQO WATERSHED JOURNAL



The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.

Starry Stonewort

By Susan Houseman

Starry Stonewort - A Threat to Gull Lake and Other Area Lakes

Highly invasive plant confirmed in Gull Lake

Responding to a Gull Lake resident's concern in August, GLQO Water Quality Committee chair, Mike Gallagher identified the dense stand of weeds around a dock in the bay north of the country club as starry stonewort - - a rapidly spreading plant-like algae that is plaguing Michigan lakes. Stephen Hamilton, a professor at the Michigan State University's Kellogg Biological Station, and Scott Brown, the executive director of the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, confirmed the presence of starry stonewort in Gull Lake and also found numerous stands of it in waters 20 to 30 feet deep as well as at a Gull Lake Country Club dock. At this time, it is unknown whether starry stonewort is present in other shoreline areas around Gull Lake.

A serious threat to fisheries, recreation

Starry stonewort is a relatively recent invader of inland Michigan lakes. Believed to have been transported in the ballast water of ships, this Eurasian species was first observed in the Saint Lawrence Seaway in 1978 and in Lake St. Claire in 1986. It was first seen in a Michigan inland lake in 2006 and starry stonewort now infects hundreds of inland lakes in our state.

Starry stonewort "may be one of greatest challenges ever faced by management professionals and lake user groups in Michigan," according to limnologists Douglas Pullman and Gary Crawford. The reason: starry stonewort can form

FALL 2014

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



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Starry Stonewort (continued)

meadows of vegetation along lake bottoms, growing up to 7 feet tall and crowding out natural vegetation. The consequences for fish habitat and populations can be devastating. In shallow areas, dense mats of starry stonewort can interfere with swimming, boating, and other recreational activities.

Lake residents should take care to not to spread starry stonewort around Gull Lake or to other lakes. Starry stonewort can easily reproduce from plant fragments. And once it establishes itself, starry stonewort is difficult if not impossible to eradicate. (See text box “Help Stop the Spread of Starry Stonewort.”)



Identifying starry stonewort

Starry stonewort looks like some of our other native, harmless aquatic plants, and so it can be hard to identify. In the late summer and fall, however, small distinctive white “stars” often form. These stars are really tiny bulbils that are the reproductive part of the plant. If you suspect you have starry stonewort along your shoreline or have questions, contact the Gull Lake Quality Organization at info@glqo.net.

Next steps

To better understand the extent of the problem, the Gull Lake Quality Organization plans to conduct a more comprehensive survey of Gull Lake once aquatic plants have come out of dormancy in the spring. We also are in contact with invasive species experts who are advising us about treatment options.

In the meantime, we are alerting area residents and businesses about starry stonewort and encouraging them to take steps to limit the spread. Area lake service companies, including Banner Beach Front, Docks Unlimited, Dock Master, and Michigan Dock, are taking extra care to clean their boots, waders, and other equipment when they remove docks this fall so as not to spread starry stonewort or other aquatic invasive species.

Help Stop the Spread of Starry Stonewort around Gull Lake and to Other Area Lakes

- If you see starry stonewort, don't rake or pull it up! Starry stonewort can reproduce from broken fragments and so raking or pulling can facilitate its spread.
- Starry stonewort and other aquatic invasive species can be easily transported in mud on boots, waders and other equipment. If you use a company to install and remove your dock, ask workers to thoroughly wash their waders and other equipment *before and after* they enter the lake.
- If you pull up weeds on your anchor, remove them and let them drop where you found them.
- If you use your boat on other lakes, make sure you thoroughly wash, drain and dry your boat between launches.

GLQO 2014 Annual Meeting Review

By Mike Gallagher

Zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) were the main topics of presentations at this year's Gull Lake Quality Organization's annual meeting.



Aquatic Invasive Species:

Kevin Walters, an aquatic biologist with the Michigan DEQ Water Resources Division, provided a detailed update on AIS in Michigan. AIS are causing or are likely to cause harm to the economy, the environment, and sometimes to human health. Five departments in the Michigan state government are working together on four goals:

1. Prevent new introductions of AIS into Michigan waters,
2. Limit the spread of established AIS,
3. Develop an early detection and rapid response program to address new AIS invasions, and
4. Manage and control the AIS to lessen the harmful impacts.

DID YOU KNOW...

This summer, the water clarity in Gull Lake was down to 33 feet. In 2013, the maximum clarity was 21 feet.

This August, you had to dive 25 feet before you would feel a change in water temperature. It was close to 80 degrees at the surface while it was just below 50 degrees at the bottom.

Visit <http://www.glqo.net> for more of the lake data that we have gathered for the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. Information for Gull Lake and Little Long Lake will be posted soon.

GLQO 2014 Annual Meeting Review (continued)

By Mike Gallagher

Michigan residents and businesses spend an estimated \$55 million annually to fight the top three invaders - - the sea lamprey, Eurasian water milfoil, and the zebra mussel. And many more invasive species - - such as starry stonewort which was recently discovered in Gull Lake - - can inflict significant economic, environmental and health costs. It is no wonder, then, why the state of Michigan is putting more emphasis on the battle than ever before. Aquatic invasive species are expensive.

Kevin left us with several simple things that we can do to help prevent the spread of AIS:

1. Clean, drain and dry off your boat before trailering to other lakes.
2. Don't dump bait into the lake.
3. Scrub off waders and boots when leaving a lake or stream.
4. Spread the word about AIS to others.

Review his presentation at www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Walters_invasive_species.pdf.

Zebra Mussels:

The most well-known aquatic invasive species in Little Long Lake and Gull Lake is the zebra mussel. We also heard from Jeff White of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, who has conducted extensive zebra mussel research on Gull Lake for several years.

Last summer, Jeff's research focused on the relationship between zebra mussel



mortality and water temperature. He was particularly interested in understanding why nearly all of the Gull Lake zebra mussels at depths less than 16 feet suddenly died in August of 2010 while those in deeper water survived. His lab work indicates that when water temperatures rise to 79 degrees for over 1,000 hours, as they did in 2010, zebra mussels die. Jeff, along with Professor Stephen Hamilton, surveyed associations at other Michigan lakes and learned that Gull Lake's experience was not unique. Survey respondents for 33 of 40 lakes also reported die-offs in 2010. Warm air temperatures in 2011 and 2012 again resulted in warm lake temperatures and zebra mussel die-offs in Gull Lake. The cooler summer of 2014 brought on the highest abundance of zebra mussels observed since the 2010 die-off, but their levels are still below previous highs.

Review his entire presentation at our website: www.glqo.net.

GLQO Board Notes and Updates

Thanks to all of the local residents and riparians who joined the GLQO for its annual meeting on August 12th! We hoped that you enjoyed the informative presentations from Jeff White and Kevin Walters. At the annual meeting, the following changes to the board were approved.



Members and guests shared a hearty thank you to outgoing board members. Pictured (left to right) are Eric Reid, Anne Couture, and Bo Van Peenan. Eric served as the organization's secretary and Communications Committee chair, while Anne served as its president.



The following new members were welcomed. Pictured (left to right) are Vicki Gesmundo Marcinek, Noah Livingston, Kathy Gallagher and Mike Gallagher.

Executive Committee: The following members were elected to office: Susan Houseman - president, Jim Collier – vice president, Jane Bruns - secretary and Chip Garside - treasurer.

There are five standing committees represented on the Gull Lake Quality Organization. They are:

- **Communications Committee**
 - The communications committee is responsible to publish a quarterly newsletter for members, maintaining and updating our website and Facebook page. The committee also coordinates special bulletins when they are warranted.
- **Water Quality Committee**
 - The water quality committee's efforts include monitoring indicators of water quality and documenting changes over time. Members are trained through Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. Members of this committee also monitor the lakes for invasive weeds.
- **Membership Committee**
 - The membership committee is responsible to organize membership drives and coordinate communications with individual members.
- **Boating Safety Committee**
 - The boating safety committee maintains contact with Kalamazoo County sheriff's office, tracks patrol activities and responds to resident's concerns.
- **Fisheries Committee**
 - The fisheries committee addresses concerns and opportunities related to health of fisheries in Gull Lake. It works to maintain a stable sport fishing environment.

Look for updates from one (or more) of our committees in each newsletter or at www.glqo.net.

Fisheries Committee Update:

The Fisheries Committee met with members of the Prairieville Township Board and discussed excessive boat noise, boat washing practices, bass tournament permits and especially, aquatic invasive species. The committee will be reaching out to bass clubs to ask for their support in preventing the transfer of AIS to and from lakes where they fish.

The Gull Lake Watershed...Appreciating our Natural Resources

Four Township Water Resources Council Hosts "Kanoë the Kazoo" on Little Long Lake

By Kenny Kornheiser, President, Four Township Water Resources Council

For the twelfth consecutive year, the Four Township Water Resources Council hosted a paddle as part of the Kanoë the Kazoo events. This past June, the Council conducted a guided tour on Little Long Lake in Richland and Barry Townships.

Previous year's paddles have been on water bodies with public access. Thanks to the generosity of the Boudeman family who provided access for our paddle, we had the opportunity to see Little Long Lake. Little Long Lake is the largest of the "sister" lakes in the Gull Lake Watershed, but has no public access site. Thirty-seven participants enjoyed this easy paddle, which focused on lake ecology and the interactions between the human and natural communities that live on or in the lake.

Two naturalists guided the tour: Dr. Stephen Hamilton, Professor of Ecosystem Ecology and Biogeochemistry at the Kellogg Biological Station, Michigan State University, and Steve Allen, a naturalist at the Kalamazoo Nature Center for many years and currently with Geum Services, Inc. Ecological and Native Plant Consulting.

We saw or heard many lake shore birds and learned about the features of Little Long Lake, such as the marl bottom, natural water budget and cycle, and invasive non-native species, such as zebra mussels. There were beds of jointed spike-sedge, a rare native sedge species, known to exist in only a handful of locations in Michigan.



Pictured is Steve Hamilton, Professor at the Kellogg Biological Station holding a map turtle found in Little Long Lake.



An early evening catch turns out to be a big surprise!

Kyle Smith is a ten-year old resident of the Gull Lake Watershed. He has been fishing regularly since he was four years old. Kyle was in for a big surprise when he cast his fishing pole in Gull Lake on September 13th. Using a minnow with a small orange and yellow jig head, Kyle caught a 12.5-inch perch!

Frequently Asked Questions About GLQO Dues

- **Dues apply to the calendar year (January 1 to December 31)**
- **Want to receive newsletters via email only? Send an email to email_only@glqo.net or make note below (this saves us money in printing and postage!)**

Your dues help to fund the GLQO's numerous initiatives.

*Support the continued vigilance of the Gull Lake Quality Organization by becoming a member.
 Your membership will help protect, monitor, and manage the Gull Lake watershed.
 Join on-line at glqo.net or mail in this form.*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Individual/Family Membership

Corporate Membership

__ Regular (\$35) \$ _____

__ Silver (\$50) \$ _____

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

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

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

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

I wish to receive the GLQO newsletter via email (to the email noted above)

I wish to have my membership level kept confidential

I do not wish to have my name published on the GLQO website or in GLQO publications

Mail to: GLQO, PO Box 34, Hickory Corners, MI 49060

The Gull Lake Quality Organization

P.O. Box 34 / Hickory Corners, Michigan / 49060
Website: glqo.net
Contact: info@glqo.net



Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 9th
Fall Water Fowl Migration
Kellogg Biological Station

Monday, November 17th at 7:00 p.m.
Four Township Water Resource Council
Board Meeting at KBS

Tuesday, November 18th at 7:00 p.m.
GLQO Board Meeting
Richland Area Community Center

Holiday Walk and Market at KBS
Weekends: November 28-December 20

Tuesday, January 20th at 7:00 p.m.
GLQO Board Meeting
Richland Area Community Center

2014-2015 Board of Directors

Susan Houseman (15-2)
President

Jim Collier (16-1)
Vice-President

Jane Bruns (14-1)
Secretary
Chip Garside (14-1)
Treasurer

Kathy Gallagher (17-1)
Mike Gallagher (17-1)

Vicki Gesmundo Marcinek (17-1)
David Halley (16-2)

Pete Hawk (16-1)
Noah Livingston (17-1)

Ed McCarty (14-1)
Gary Mittelbach (16-2)

Tim Richardson (16-1)
Drew Worgess (15-1)

*GLQO by-laws allow volunteers to serve as directors for two consecutive three-year terms. After each Director's name are two numbers: the **year** their current term expires, and the **number** of the current term.*

We welcome you to volunteer for committee work (of your choice) and to participate in our board meetings.

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