

## Our Mission

To learn, study and monitor the condition of Portage Lake and take steps to keep it healthy and viable.

## Friends of Portage Lake

[www.portagelakefriends.org](http://www.portagelakefriends.org)

# Portage Lake Report



*Everyone's Invited!*

## Public Meeting April 19

If you are like my family, you're anxious for the weather to warm up so you can put the dock in the water and start using the lake. Before long summer will be here and the lake will be alive with boating, fishing, and swimming.

As a committee, we have been working diligently to get training for a water monitoring program, develop a program for control of invasive weed species, plan fundraising events, and to schedule some community activities for July 4<sup>th</sup>. We've been working on these and other items related to the lake at our monthly meetings.

We've scheduled an information meeting for friends and residents of Portage Lake on Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the West Mendon United Methodist Church fellowship hall. Please come!

At this meeting, we will discuss the weed species that pose the greatest threat to the health of our lake, where they were found during a survey, and options to control them. See page 2 for a proposed invasive weed treatment plan for this year which we are considering if there is enough support.

Scott Brown of the Michigan Lakes & Streams Association will also give a short presentation on the challenges that face Michigan lakes today and how lakes similar to ours are dealing with them.

Our hope is that through our two fundraising events, the Triathlon on June 12<sup>th</sup> and the pancake breakfast on August 7<sup>th</sup>, we can raise roughly half of the funds needed to conduct this year's treatment program, which has been estimated at \$6,300. The remainder of the funds required

would need to be covered by donations. If each lake resident would be willing to make a small contribution, we could hit our goal and conduct a much needed initial treatment program this year. Please con-

tact your committee representative if you are interested in helping with either fundraiser.

I look forward to seeing all of you on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement of these efforts to maintain and protect our beloved lake.

*Mark Parks, Chairman*

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## Committee Members

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## *Initial Lake Treatment Proposal for 2010*

# Committee Endorses Lake Treatment Plan

The Friends of Portage Lake committee has agreed to seek funds required for an initial invasive weed treatment program this year.

Two factors are driving this decision. First is the need to “nip in the bud” the possible spread of Eurasian watermilfoil, which has been found in very limited areas to date. Preventing its spread is a high priority.

Second, we need to see what treatment, if any, will be effective in treating a major infestation of Cabomba which has overtaken certain areas of the lake. There are very few approved treatments for this invasive species, and we need to see what will work. The proposal is to experiment in Snug Harbor, and if successful to expand that treatment next year.

Our overall goal is to manage invasive plants to restore and protect the ecological integrity, aesthetic appeal, and recreational viability of the lake. Native plants will be preserved and protected. There are five stated objectives to this year’s treatment:

1. Perform two surveys of the lake to more accurately map the extent of non-native plant growth.
2. Perform at least one herbicide application in May to up to 5 acres having significant Eurasian watermilfoil growth. An additional treatment in July is an option.
3. Perform a trial herbicide application to the 2.5 acre cove at Snug Harbor in May or June to gauge its potential control effectiveness on Cabomba .
4. Perform additional research to determine if any new Cabomba control measures have the potential to work in our lake.

5. Review progress from the above activities to determine new management plan goals for next year.

The cost of these activities is as follows:

State Permit	\$ 200
May watermilfoil treatment	\$3,745
Cost of trial cabomba treatment depends on method approved by the state. Our preferred choice is Sonar:	\$1,590
July watermilfoil treatment	\$ 749
Total:	<u>\$6,284</u>

Donations will need to be raised soon to determine whether we have enough support to go ahead with treatment this year. Come to the meeting April 19 to learn more!



**Saturday, June 12, 2010**

*on the grounds of Klines Resort*

*Sponsored by Friends of Portage Lake*

Information, maps and on-line registration at:

[www.doubletimetri.com](http://www.doubletimetri.com)

## Protecting Portage Lake: Up Fertilizer Creek?

by Elayna Grody

AH Spring! It is so nice to have sunny days and warming weather, with the lake enticing us to get out and enjoy. But, of course, spring also brings chores to prepare for that enjoyment. One of those items is the upkeep of our coveted lawns – beautiful, green, and lush.

To maintain the “perfect” lawn, many of us seed, weed, fertilize, water and mow. But did you know these very activities can have a negative impact upon our lake?

Recent results from the EPA’s National Lake Assessment show the two biggest problems with our lakes are poor lakeshore habitat and high nutrient levels. One problem we are trying to solve in Portage Lake is the high concentration of invasive plants in certain areas, caused by high nutrient levels in the water – especially phosphorus.

The nutrients come in runoff from the land around us. As rain falls on our roofs, driveways, walkways and lawns, it picks up oil, gas, fertilizer, pesticides and pet waste and carries them to the lake. Since the land around the lake is the last defense against pollutants, how we design and maintain that area can have significant impacts.

Although there are many things we can do as land owners to protect our lake, for right now, let’s just look at how we can maintain a nice lawn while protecting our water at the same

time. The good part is we can save time and money by following these helpful tips:

1. **Grass length** – Cut your grass at a height of 2 ½ - 3”. Raising your mowing height can reduce weed levels by over 50%. Having a grass height in this range also encourages thicker turf and deeper root systems, and requires less water and less fertilizer.
2. **Leave the grass clippings** on your lawn instead of bagging them. This will provide added nutrients and moisture to your lawn, and shorten the amount of time & work for you.
3. **Watering** – if you must water your lawn during a dry spell, try watering it with water from the lake. Those high level nutrients in the lake water will be absorbed by your lawn. This also helps clean the water before it drains back to the lake.

### SOIL TESTING

An inexpensive soil test can be done through the MSU Extension, 612 E. Main St., Centreville, MI 49032.

Phone: 269-467-5511.

To see how to collect a soil sample, link to:

<http://www.youtube.com/>

Search for “how to collect a soil sample”



4. **Maintain a natural buffer** of native wildflowers, trees and shrubs along the lake shore. You can also plant “**rain gardens**” to capture the flow of water out of your downspouts. This will slow down the runoff and help to absorb the pollutants before they reach the water. Both natural buffers and rain gardens can be done in very aesthetically pleasing ways and will also protect your property from shoreline erosion. The recommended buffer width is 30 feet or more. However, a minimum of 10 feet is considered necessary. If you would like help with native plant selection and design, just email me. (see pg. 1)
5. **Get your Soil tested!** Much of the soil around the lake is nutrient rich and does not need fertilizing. It will tell you exactly what types and amounts of chemicals your lawn actually needs to be maintained. Therefore, you will save money by not buying fertilizers that you don’t need. See pg. 4 if testing shows a need for fertilizer.

**IF your soil sample indicates a need to fertilize:**

- **Apply only half** the recommended amount and leave your grass clippings on your lawn. The grass clippings will make up for the 50% of fertilizer not applied.
- **Do not apply** fertilizers or pesticides if rain is forecast OR within 30 feet of the shoreline.
- **Wait** until lawn is actively growing before applying fertilizer. Any applied before then will not be taken up by the grass and will wash into the lake.
- **Time-release fertilizers** may seem more expensive but are actually more efficient. More fertilizer is used by the plants instead of being washed away by rain.
- **NO Phosphorus** – This is the big nasty. On a bag of fertilizer, you will see three numbers (30-3-15). This is the amount of Nitrogen(30%), Phosphorus(3%) and Potassium(15%). Therefore, you want the middle number to be “0”.
- **Avoid mixes** of pesticide/herbicide and fertilizer . They usually have more types and amounts of chemicals than you need. Many native aquatic plants and animals can be harmed by even reduced concentrations of these chemicals.
- **Talk** to your lawn care professionals. If you contract out the work, make sure you are conveying your desires to protect the health and water quality of our lake with the company you hire.

**1st ANNUAL JULY 4TH  
BOAT PARADE**

JOIN “FRIENDS OF PORTAGE  
LAKE” FOR OUR FIRST JULY  
4TH BOAT PARADE!

DECORATE YOUR BOAT IN A  
PATRIOTIC STYLE! YOU JUST  
MIGHT WIN THE TRAVELING  
TROPHY FOR MOST  
PATRIOTIC BOAT.



**TIME:** 1:00PM

**ROUTE:** We'll cir-  
cle the lake to show  
off our styles.

For More information on starting  
point and participation contact:

Kevin Hughes

Email: [chrisnkev19@comcast.net](mailto:chrisnkev19@comcast.net)

Phone: (269) 649-9535

We are delighted with the re-  
sponse we are getting from our  
"Friends of Portage Lake".

Many thanks to those who have  
made donations. We appreciate  
your support and interest.

Our initial fundraising goal is  
\$6,300, with half to be raised by  
fundraisers and the other half by  
donations. Please help with a do-  
nation if you are able, and be sure  
to support our fundraisers by vol-  
unteering and/or participating!

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Kauffman, Treasurer  
Friends of Portage Lake  
56112 Angevine Rd.  
Mendon, MI 49072

**I'm a Friend of  
Portage Lake!**

*Check all that apply, clip &  
mail to: 56112 Angevine Rd.  
Mendon, MI 49072*

- Contribution enclosed:  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ (Thanks!)
- Interested in lake monitoring training.
- Volunteer to help with Double Time Triathlon June 12
- Volunteer to help with Pancake Breakfast August 7
- Send me emails with copies of the MLSA newsletter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

