Summer 2019 Annual Meeting – Saturday July 6th

As in the past, the Birch lake Association’s annual meeting will take place at the Kewadin Methodist Church, 234 Cairn Highway. Coffee and Donuts will be available starting at 8:30. The meeting is from 9:01 to 10:29.

From the President Jim Muth:

During our fall 2018 Board of Directors meeting we discussed how the board can help educate lakeside owners of the many responsibilities of lakeside ownership. From that discussion the board’s “Restore the Shore” concept evolved.

The general concept is:

- Identify areas where we could improve set back and buffer zones
- Identify local and state educational resources that could be of help
- Identify local and state financial resources that could be of help
- Work with a local nursery that can provide Birch Lake property owners different varieties of birch trees to plant. Goal is 150 trees planted lake side, over the next 3 years, starting in spring 2020
- Have educational opportunities for property owners to improve their living lake shore
- Open a best practice Living Lake Shore log on the web page

There has been an ordinance in Elk Rapids township since around 1960 that established a vegetative buffer zone on all lake lots. The lake water quality benefits of such zones are and have been well documented. Unfortunately, the ordinance and the enforcement of the ordinance has been either happen-stance or ignored. Over the last 45 years there have been some property owners unaware of the ordinance. There have been some owners that want a totally unobstructed view of the lake and think “I bought the land therefore I can do anything I want with it”. Unfortunately, this is like owning a car and thinking you have the right to operate the car in a harmful and dangerous way.

Birch Lake, in general, has many good buffer zones on many of the properties. Some others could use a little help.

After the fall Board of Directors meeting, Jim Muth met with the Tip of the Mitt Counsel Directors in Charlevoix. This meeting was a brainstorming effort on how we access different funds and resources to kick start our lake stewardship efforts.

Working with Caroline Keson of the Tip of the Mitt staff, we applied for two available grants. One $2,500 grant was from The Tip of the Mitt group. We also applied for a $4,500 grant from the Great Lakes Energy group.
At the time of this writing we have been approved for the $2,500 grant. The $4,500 Great Lake Energy grant is still in process and we hope to hear back on that grant in June.

In conversations with the various stakeholders, the location of the Birch Lake Stewardship Committee’s first project will be the MDOT roadside park. This location provided us the best location and classroom to demonstrate a living lakeshore practice.

MDOT Roadside Park Before

Example of living shoreline protection - After

We will need some more volunteers when we start the project, so more information to come.
Elk Rapids Quality of Life Statement

Elk Rapids Township Planning and Zoning thoughts on Quality of Life. Elk Rapids Township is a zoned community. Before you start a project on your property or provide a service to a property owner in Elk Rapids Township, consult with Elk Rapids Township at 231-264-9333 to ensure the activity or project will not cause a violation or one of the rules adopted by the Township to protect the Quality of Life. The land and resources have been here for a long time and our visit in this community is only temporary. We need to protect the natural resources during our tenure in the community and maintain the quality of life for future generations.

The Township is blessed with an abundance of natural resources including: quality lakes, superior agricultural land, and strategic natural woodlands and wetlands. These combined resources result in a quality community shared by many residents who make frequent decisions that affect the quality of life in the Township. Such decisions include: recycling, trash disposal, building construction, tree removal, lawn fertilizer, and many others. Township rules and regulations are geared to help protect the quality of life in the community while respecting individual property rights. For example, there are many techniques a Township can adopt to protect trees. The Township has selected a minimal regulation regarding tree cutting within 25 feet of a shoreline. With Township approval, a property owner is allowed to achieve a clear view of the water while the tree canopy and root system capture rainfall and prevent erosion resulting in clean lake water and a natural shoreline enjoyed by all. Other examples include building separation standards, setback distance from a road, and separation of a business from a residential area.

MSU Extension Introduction to Lakes

Six-week Online Course

Submitted by Ken Kohlman

Pam and I enrolled in this six-week course to educate ourselves about our inland lake and it’s watershed. From the comfort of home, we had 24/7 access to six online units of closed caption video lectures, interactive activities, resource lists, discussion forums, quizzes and webinars with classmates and MSU Extension educators. This definitely increased our understanding of lake ecology, watersheds, shorelines, riparian law, aquatic plants and the responsibility of stewardship of our beautiful lake resource.

We have spent several years here updating our home and surrounding property with improvements that we believed to be rational and respectful of a healthy lake ecology. However, upon reflection during and after completing this course, we have realized that we were not fully aware of some of the consequences of our updates. We had been aware of the damage caused by fertilizers that contribute phosphorous to runoff, that reducing shoreline buffer zones eliminate habitat for all sorts of beneficial creatures and that natural runoff filtration by transition and buffer zone vegetation promotes and protects a healthy lake. We were less aware that the amount of impervious surface area that we created as a driveway diminished the effect of the buffer zone that we have always cherished and nurtured. We also learned about the damage that wakes from recreational activities can cause to shorelines and which types of remedial landscaping techniques are available to mitigate shoreline erosion, the importance of ecologically friendly agricultural practices, the conversion of septic systems to sewer systems in our extended watershed and the importance of shoreline trees including the practice of letting them fall into the lake when they too weak to stand thus providing a renewed lakeshore habitat.

All in all, the course provided a valuable education for us and is highly recommended for all who love our lake and wish to keep it naturally healthy.
New Dues Collection Structure

The Board has approved a new and improved method for you and your neighbors to pay your dues. Bring your check book!

When you arrive at the meeting, just north of the donuts, there will be a table of alphabetized dues envelopes, one of which will be yours. In each envelope there will be a dues work sheet for you to fill out.

We will provide some more information at the meeting for you.

When you are done, put your filled-out dues’ worksheet and your check back in the envelope and on your way out, drop the envelopes in the box by the door.

This should eliminate some of the delays when folks arrive.

Birch Lake Association Dues Work Sheet 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Dues and Fall Sewer Preventative Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td>$40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Stewardship Donation</td>
<td></td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch Tree Purchase (per tree)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$90.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Total $40 or $65 or $90                  Check Number __________

Name: ____________________________________________________________________

Lake Address: __________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

Mailing Address (If different). __________________________________________

E-Mail address: ________________________________________________________

Phone Number: ______________________________________________________________________

** Yes, I would like to help and be part of the ____________________________ committee.

Please make checks out to the Birch Lake Association. If unable to attend the meeting, please mail the form and check to Karen Kies at 6367 Timberlake Drive, Elk Rapids, MI. 49629
My name is Maxwell Field and I am a Biologist for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians - Natural Resource Department (LTBB NRD). I have been in contact with MDNR Biologists Patrick Hanchin and Heather Hettinger about conducting an adult walleye abundance estimate on Birch Lake as soon as the ice goes out this Spring.

Part of the work that occurs within the 1836 Ceded Territory by the 5 Tribes and MDNR is to collect population data for walleye on inland lakes. We are collectively trying to build a better statistics model to predict adult walleye abundance on both stocked and naturally sustaining walleye populations. LTBB has been one of the major players in this work and we try to conduct one of these walleye estimates every Spring. We usually target smaller lakes where we know we can properly assess the population with just our crew. Other times we will team up and conduct a collaborative estimate on a larger lake with multiple crews.

The survey typically lasts no more than two weeks after ice-out. We would be utilizing fyke nets, which is a form of trap net, to catch and mark adult walleye along with electrofishing from our LTBB shock boat. We capture walleye and mark them with a dorsal spine clip. The clip serves both as a mark for the Mark-Recapture population estimate and as an aging structure which we can age later in lab. After a week of marking walleye, we come back 48-hours later and do the Recapture portion of the survey. That entails electrofishing the shoreline one more time and generating the estimate based on how many marked fish show up vs. unmarked fish.

We would be more than happy to share with the Birch Lake Association the results of our survey upon completion. We appreciate the cooperation we received from Jim Muth and the Birch Lake Association.

-Maxwell Field
LTBB NRD

Slate of Officers for 2019-2020

A nominating committee has been formed to nominate new board members and officers. We welcome and encourage new member involvement. The italicized positions are up for election this year. If you are interested in serving on the board or would like to sit in on a board meeting, contact Woody Wright.

**Association Officers**

*President - Jim Muth*  
Treasurer - Karen Kies

Vice President - Bill Romska  
*Secretary - Mary Sawyer*

**Directors**

North Side  
Aaron Edel  
Paul Moyer

East Side  
Steve Yencich  
Mike Keilen

West Side  
Keith Childs  
Mike Manzardo

South Side  
Garry Sumerix

**Committees:** No one can do everything, but everyone can do something!

**Lake Stewardship Committee**

Jim Muth  
Keith Child  
Ken Kohlman  
Jack and Nina Palazzolo  
Tim Pioszak

**Communication Committee**

*Keith Childs - Web Page*  
Steve Yencich - Facebook  
Woody Wright - Communication

**Rental Property Committee**

Garry Sumerix
Memorial Birch Tree Sale

Someone suggested it would be nice to restore the many birch trees Birch lake used to have around the lake. So, the idea was forwarded onto the Lake Stewardship committee. We contacted Ralph at Pine Hills Nursery and explained what we were trying to achieve. He suggested we go with the native paper birch trees and that we use what is called bare root stock tree. Similar to the picture, they will be small clumps of trees 2 -3 feet tall. They are easier to plant in the spring with a better chance of surviving if it becomes dry. Growth rates are 2 feet or so a year.

Our nursery cost of $25.00, per tree, and is based on us purchasing a minimum of 50 birch trees. Our goal is 50 trees planted over the next 3 years.

There are a few lake residents that remember the Birch tree lined lake of old. Many of us will most likely not see the trees we plant today reach full maturity. But it is a legacy that current owners can pass down to the next generation of Birch Lake residents.

Tree order forms are going to be on the dues work sheet. You pay for your tree(s) at the annual meeting and then the tree will be available next spring for planting.
Birch Lake Courtesy Guidelines

• PARKING: Please try to minimize parking on the road both during the day and at night

• BEACH FIRES: Never leave a fire unattended. Be aware of which way the smoke goes so it does not disturb your neighbors. Be sure fires and embers are completely out before leaving the area

• MUSIC/NOISE: Not everyone has the same preference for music. So, be considerate of your neighbors and keep the volume down. No noise after 10PM

• FIREWORKS: New Fireworks Law 2019 - Limited Days
  • December 31 until 1 a.m. on January 1
  • The Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Memorial Day until 11:45 pm on each of those days
  • June 29 to July 4 until 11:45 pm on each of those day
  • July 5, if that date is a Friday or Saturday, until 11:45 pm
  • The Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Labor Day until 11:45 pm on each of those days
  • Violators can be fined by either $500.00 or $1,000.00. Any problems, contact the Antrim County Sheriff’s Office at 231-533-8627
  • For more information on fireworks regulations, go to michigan.gov/lara.

• PETS: More pets are lost on the Fourth of July than any other day of the year. The pets around the lake have requested that fireworks be limited to the 4th of July and not the 7 days allowed by the new law

• TRASH/GARBAGE: Must be secured in animal-proof containers. Use only official blue bags that can be purchased at the Village Market. Take the bags to the Elk Rapids Dump Center located off Cairn Highway on the way to Elk Rapids. The Dump is open Wednesdays from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm and Saturdays from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm.

• RECYCLE: Recycle items can be deposited in the containers behind the Old Milton Township Hall in Kewadin or South of the Police Station in Elk Rapids.

• DUCKS: Do not feed the ducks, geese or other wildlife. Duck’s feces release a parasite into the water which enters human skin and causes “Swimmer’s Itch”.

• LOONS: A floating loon nest has been placed in the water just south of the roadside park. Because loons are very private birds, they will scare easily. Please stay at least 200 feet away from the nest platform. For more details on the laws regarding the loons visit https://birchlake.club/loons#loons-law-card.

• SEWERS: Do not dump grease into drains and use only liquid laundry & dishwasher detergent. Incompatible items for the sewer system include: facial tissues, feminine products, disposal cleaning products, paper towels, etc. Alarm horns can be silenced at your Service Box on your cottage, but do not shut off the power. Report problems to Elk Rapids Department of Public Work at 231-264-9971 (or 231-264-8181 evenings and weekends if the green tank is overflowing.)

• JET SKIS/PWC: We have a 330 acre lake, there is NO reason why anyone needs to buzz close to docks, lifts, rafts, and swimming areas. You MUST:
  • Stay at least 150 feet from the shore
  • At least 100 feet from dock-end or raft
  • At least 150 feet distance behind boats and other Personal Water Craft (PWC)
  • No one under the age of 14 may operate a PWC. All users must wear lifejackets.
  • Hours of PWC operation - from 8 A.M. to 1 hour before sunset. Violators are subject to a ticket, a fine, jail or all 3! It is recommended that you have your guests and renters sign this agreement.

• LIGHTS: Our Night Sky is spectacular. Please enjoy it as well as help your neighbors appreciate its beauty by minimizing the use of lights after dark

• NEIGHBORS: Respect your neighbors’ property rights. This includes the Riparian Property Rights that extend out into the lake.
4th of July Boat Parade

Do you have the best decorated boat? If so, you can tell all of your friends!

For many years now, the Birch Lake Association has organized an annual Boat Parade. This year it will take place on Thursday, July 4th. As in the past, all watercraft will gather at the Southeast Corner of the lake in the area of Rock Island. Arrive early so that the parade can start at 4:00.

It doesn’t matter who takes the lead but please try to keep up with the boat in front of you. *Not too fast, not too slow.* Non-powered watercraft are not recommended, unless you are very fast. We usually go around the lake one and a half times or until someone calls us home. Let’s entertain the land lubbers as we circle the lake, so decorate your boats in a Star Spangled Manner.

1st place award - free dues for the following year.
Boaters Safety- Michigan boating laws requirements

Antrim County Sheriff patrol - Scott Boni 231-533-8627. Officer Boni has committed to more visits to the lake this year. If anyone witnesses any unsafe or illegal behavior, get the boat hull numbers, pictures if possible and call the Sheriff’s Office at 231-533-8627.

Boat Operator age restrictions - who may operate a boat?

- **Less than 12 years old:**
  - May legally operate a boat powered by a motor of no more than 6 horsepower (hp) without restrictions
  - May legally operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 6 hp, but no more than 35 hp, only if they have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board; and are directly supervised on board by a person at least 16 years of age
  - May not legally operate a boat powered by a motor of more than 35 hp under any conditions

- **Less than 23 years old:**
  - May legally operate a boat only if they have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board

- **Older than 24 years old:**
  - May legally operate a boat without restrictions. For their own safety and the safety of others they should take a boating safety course. [https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79144_79642---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79144_79642---,00.html)

Personal Watercraft (PWC) Operator age restrictions - who may operate a PWC?

- **Less than 14 years old:**
  - May not legally operate a PWC

- **14 and 15 years old:**
  - May legally operate a PWC only if they have been issued a boating safety certificate [https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79144_79642---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79144_79642---,00.html) and is accompanied on board by their parent, legal guardian or by a person who has been designated by the parent or legal guardian and is at least 21 years of age; or is operating or riding the PWC at a distance of not more than 100 feet from their parent, legal guardian or by a person who has been designated by the parent or legal guardian and is at least 21 years of age.

- **16 years old and born after December 31, 1978:**
  - May legally operate a PWC only if they have obtained a boating safety certificate [https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79144_79642---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79144_79642---,00.html)

- **Born or or before December 31, 1978:**
  - May legally operate a PWC without restrictions

Michigan law does not prohibit drinking on the water. Passengers—and the watercraft operator—can openly cruise around with a bottle or two. But that’s where the leniency stops. Just as operating a motor vehicle under the influence is illegal, so is jumping behind the wheel of a boat or PWC.

A **blood-alcohol content of 0.10 percent or greater** constitutes operating under the influence.