



Les Cheneaux Islands Association

Spring Newsletter

May, 2020



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President's Letter

Jim Keighley

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It has been a very cold spring, but it was an easy ice out. Water levels are near the peak of last year and predicted to go up a few more inches. Most people will have some dock work to do.

LCI is the place we come to get away from it all, but unfortunately COVID19 is impacting things here as it is impacting the country and world. We are trying to communicate COVID related information (mainly thru the FB page) for you to use in adjusting your plans and activities. We are not trying to be a source of direction.

As the Governor's Executive Orders are generally relaxing – the COVID situation remains dynamic. Every event committee, every business, and every individual up here is trying to keep up with it and sort out the proper response. You will need to keep checking with your service providers and information sources for the status.

Our society will get thru COVID, but a massive event like that will leave a lasting impact on many things:

- Behaviors (ex: for years my Japanese business colleagues wore masks at work when they had a cold – will that be more common in our future?)
- Culture & customs (ex: will handshakes survive?)
- Systems (ex: how will our food be processed, prepared, and served?)

A natural reaction is to assume that all the changes COVID leaves behind will be bad. Sure, some of those will/may be a pain, but some will be good and better things. I try to keep an eye out for those things within my sphere of existence - especially when things I can't control don't go as hoped. Good stuff is out there – just have to take/make time to see it.

Case in point, the LCIA has at least two (probably more) potentials:

(1) Virtual Meetings

Think Zoom or Google Meet.

We are going to hold the May LCIA Board Meeting via Google Meet due to the

COVID travel restrictions. Al McCord is setting that up for us. The May meeting has always been a struggle to schedule because many Board Members are not up yet and attendance is low. Google Meet solves that. Maybe we should give Board Members the option to physically or virtually attend all future Board Meetings?

(2) LCIA Calendar

Typically the LCIA puts out a hard copy LCI events calendar. With this summer's local events cancelling and changing in response to COVID – a printed calendar will be out of date 24 hours after mailing it. So for this summer – we will have to use the LCIA FB page for event announcements. Granted not everyone uses FB – but a virtual calendar might make more sense every year – saving future effort to create and mail it.

Enjoy the interesting summer ahead of us – looking forward to seeing you all.

keighleyja@gmail.com
906-484-2369.

Manager's Report

Mark Engle

Spring Weather

Our calendar indicates springtime, but the atmosphere in Les Cheneaux has been stuck on cold and windy. The morning of May 14 was the first time in quite a spell that the temperature was above freezing. Frosty mornings and daily high temps struggling to get beyond 40 degrees have meant winter coats, long johns and another log on the fire.

Ice-out happened earlier than usual; the Great Lakes had less ice cover than we have seen for many years. I launched a boat on April 5 in order to retrieve pilings and pieces of our docks. I don't recall every having open water that early in the spring.

Lake Huron Water Level

Lake Huron water levels remained high throughout the winter months. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, record high water levels were established for the months of January through April, 2020. The corps' projections for summer show water depths at or slightly above last year through July.

LCIA Inspections & Docks

Travel conditions were far from ideal particularly for property inspectors of island residences. Poor ice was a problem early and late this winter. Our inspectors did manage to get to outlying island properties during the winter, but it was not easy.

High water, ice and wind have had a negative impact on many docks during the winter months. Property inspecting is difficult this spring as many docks are under water or damaged and not safe to walk on. It is at a point that two people are required to inspect island members; one person walks while the boat operator looks for a usable dock or a place to beach a boat...it is tedious right now.

A positive, is that we have not had any security reports; no break-ins or theft. There are instances of fallen trees or branches but no damage to buildings has been reported at this point.

Due to circumstances involving one of our inspectors, I have done some property checks this spring. I have noticed that many members do not post their green 911 property identification number. Being a substitute inspector, I found it difficult and time consuming, in some instances, to identify whose property I was actually on. Also, if an emergency responder is looking for a residence (especially at night), a reflective sign with the property number is very important.

Buoys & Navigation

The U.S. Coast Guard's aids to navigation are in place. Steve Honnila is readying the LCIA buoys for the upcoming boating season. High water does not always mean safe boating, there are obstacles that now cannot be seen, so caution is still a priority.

Another safety concern on the water is the amount of floating or partially submerged debris. Be on the lookout at all times while boating, don't let the great scenery of the islands totally interrupt your focus on the surface of the water ahead!

Fish & Game Report

Our local deer herd had a relatively easy winter compared to the past few years. The result of a mild winter should be a bump in the whitetail population.

Perch fishing was excellent on the late ice in Musky Bay, Hessel Bay and Government Bay. Splake fishing was also excellent in Hessel Bay. Many splake in the 8-12 lb. range were caught; these fish are fun to catch and very good eating.

The spring migration of double crested cormorants is in full swing as there appears to be increased numbers of the fish eating birds. Movement to control cormorant populations is still underway, but it is a slowwww, bureaucratic process. We are represented by very good DNR fisheries biologists who have a long history of knowledge concerning the Les Cheneaux fishery. It is frustrating however, to once again have to prove that cormorant over-population is a detriment to the populations of our once booming, native fish species.

Youth Boating Certification & Water Safety Committee

Dave Robertson, Chair

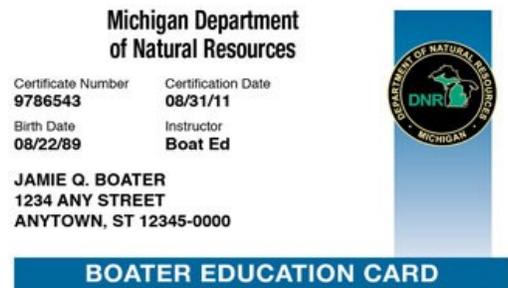
Committee Members: Dave Robertson, Chair
John Griffin, Diane Patrick, David Morrison, Lindsey Morrison

The Committee decided that the annual boating certification and safety class will **NOT** be conducted this summer due to covid-19.

All boaters require certification by Michigan law. Boaters born after June 30, 1996 and most personal watercraft operators who operate a vessel in Michigan must have a boater education card (boating safety certificate). There are a few different ways to earn your boating safety certificate:

Get your Michigan boating safety certificate online:

- Take a boating safety class at: <https://boat-ed.com/michigan/>
- Take and pass the final exam.
- Print out your permanent Michigan boating safety certificate once you have successfully completed the course, passed the exam and paid the course fee (pay only when you pass).



The Coast Guard Auxiliary formerly offered boat inspections. HOWEVER, the Les Cheneaux Auxiliary disbanded, because its members aged and retired without any younger people taking their place. The CG will **NOT** evaluate your boat until further notice.

Deputy Sherlund's most common citations for inadequate equipment are: 1] the lack of a PFD for EACH occupant of a boat, and 2] the lack of a whistle or horn. His pet peeve is boaters who don't turn their lights on as dusk approaches. Unless you wish to make an extra monetary donation to the Coast Guard or County, equip your boat properly!

*Should you wish to participate in this Committee, please contact Dave Robertson: 312.961.1312
dave@robertsonwall.com*

Enjoy the rest of spring. Happy and safe boating. DHR

Environment Committee

Robert Smith, Chair

Decreased algae density in Les Cheneaux Island waters is attributed to cooler water temperatures resulting from seven years of continuous rise in Lake Huron water level of over five feet.

OVERVIEW: From 2013 through 2019 water levels in the Les Cheneaux Islands have risen 63 inches (160 cm). During the same period, average water temperatures dropped 3.5° to 4.5° Centigrade (8° Fahrenheit).

It was expected that these shifts in conditions would result in a related downward trend in phosphorus concentrations that are monitored each summer as part of our LCIA water quality program. This was not the case, however. Phosphorus values appeared to change little.

Neither did it make sense that, while phosphorus concentrations remained level, the algae population densities decreased. Phosphorus is a primary food source for algae and if the phosphorus levels remained level, then algae concentrations would have been expected to remain within a constant range as well. Algae populations measured were phytoplankton, the free-living plankton that are found dispersed in the water column.

A full report on this topic paper examines the apparent disconnect between the expected and the actual phosphorus, algae and temperature relationships can be found at the Watershed Council website: <lescheneauxwatershed.org>. On the home page select "Library" ---Water Quality---then scroll to WQ7.

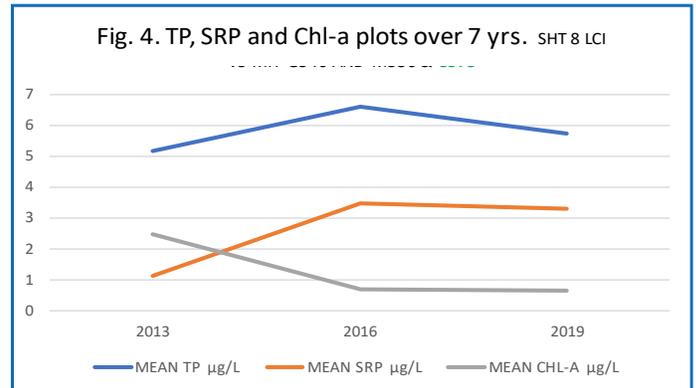
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Sincere appreciation is expressed to several people involved during this lengthy study, they include:

- Editors of this document: Bill Kurtz, Scott Myers and Ed Rusk.
- Sample analysis: Tim Veverica and staff at the Univ Mich Biol Station at Douglas Lake.
- Sample collection: Scott Myers, Lynn Wolters, Neil Williams, Mark Clymer, Mike & Laurel Jellison, Fred and Joyce Moore, Barb Smith, Mary Baker, Dave Dunn.

Mean seasonal values reflect expected relationships among TP, SRP and Chl-a, in that TP values were greater than SRP and SRP values were greater than Chl-a, with the exception of 2013. The low SRP level in 2013 was very likely less than Chl-a due to a strong demand for SRP by a dense phytoplankton population. Both TP and SRP were elevated in 2016 & 2019. The elevated SRP was consistent with recording of lower Chl-a during those same seasons.

A question remains about both TP and SRP being present at elevated titers in LCI while the Chl-a levels were consistently low during the 2016-2019 period (Fig. 4). The continued rise in L Huron level during this seven-year period can explain both of the following possibilities. Temperature: When seasonal temperatures are considered then the picture becomes more clear (Fig. 10). Note: Chl-a values were multiplied by 10 in Fig. 10 in order for the reader to better visualize the relationship between temperature and Chl-a. Mean LCI seasonal temperatures were 3.5° to 4.5° C cooler in 2016 and 2019 than in 2013. The decrease in Chl-a corresponds with the temperature decline for the same period and is very likely the reason that SRP concentrations remained high during those two periods. Another cause for lower Chl-a levels in 2016 and 2019 could be a decrease in micronutrients due to the influx of nutrient-poor waters from L Huron. Micronutrient levels within LCI waters will be studied during the 2020 season to determine how much, if any, impact they had on Chl-a concentrations from 2016 through 2019.



TP (Total Phosphorus) SRP (Soluble Phosphorus, the form algae can use) Chl (Chlorophyll)

