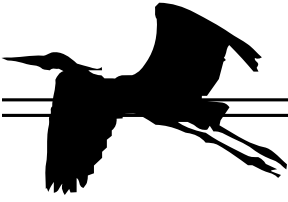


The Lower Herring Lake Association

Spring Newsletter May 2026



President's Letter

ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting will be held on July 4, 2026, at the White Owl at 10:00am. Please join us for a lively discussion, coffee/cookies/doughnuts and a celebration of lake life and our country's 250th anniversary. I promise to keep the meeting under an hour. Any attempts to make the meeting run long will be met with a nasty glare and snarky comments.

4TH OF JULY BOAT PARADE

The "Unsanctioned Boat Parade" will begin at 1:00 out in front of the White Owl and will be hopefully led by the Lake's Perennial Grand Marshall. All ne'er-do-wells are asked to trail the parade by a substantial distance so as to not endanger the main fleet.

AND HE PAIRED THE ANIMALS TWO BY TWO!!!

Wow, after January to March of almost biblical snowfall, the April rains came. The Homestead Dam in Benzonia was threatened, but as of this writing has survived (any damage to be determined). Herring Creek has been roaring into Lower Herring Lake, but luckily, the outlet is flowing in like manner. Water levels in Lake Michigan rose 17 inches from early March through mid-April, but that still leaves us well below the nightmare levels of 2020/21. These conditions will probably lead to us being very close to dam level for most of the summer. A further update will be given at the Annual Meeting.

SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTIONS

While we have discussed ad nauseum this topic over the last couple of years, it seems like a good time to bring it up yet again. I attended a meeting of the Clean Water Coalition last fall and at that meeting, the Glen Lakes Lake Association reported on a recent study that they did on the age/status of the septic systems on their two lakes. Not surprisingly many systems are too old to be captured by Leelanau's

Health Department and many of them that were in the system had not been tested/reviewed in years, if ever. Because of the extremely low ownership turnover on Lower Herring Lake (the only time septic systems are required to be reviewed), we can't stress enough to our members that your septic tanks need to be regularly pumped and serviced. If you haven't had a formal review, I believe the Benzie County Health Department will do that for free. As we all treasure the pristine condition of our lake, please take the time and consideration of your neighbors to have that done.

INVASIVES TREATMENT

Our two contractors again treated the lake last fall for Eurasian Milfoil, Split Leaf Cattails and Phragmites. Both contractors reported that the levels of each of these nasty aquatic nuisances are under control. We will continue to treat them as necessary. As it has been a little while, please fill out the permission slip for treatment attached to this newsletter and bring it with you to our annual meeting, or alternatively, it can be uploaded to our website where indicated.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In advance, I would like to thank all of my fellow board members for their time and efforts on the Board. Luckily, in these times of low water, we don't have as many crises to deal with and hopefully it will stay that way for years to come. At this time, I am unaware that any of our current board are seeking to step down, but if there are any Members that wish to join the Board, please contact me at todd.frank62@yahoo.com so that I can have ballots ready for the meeting.

DNR BOAT LAUNCH

The DNR did do some work at the launch last year which hopefully is helpful to all boaters in launching their watercraft. As usual, user beware!

www.LowerHerringLakeAssociation.org

President's Letter *Continued*

WAKE BOATS

The state is currently considering a new law that requires all wake boats in "wake mode" to stay 500 feet off of all docks and in at least 20 feet of water. In advance of that law passing, please be considerate of fellow lake residents and other boaters. If you haven't seen any of the videos, it has been shown that in shallow water every pass that a wake boat does, causes incredible harm to the lake bottom and in many instances renders the bottom to a barren desert like state. Please keep that in mind.

JET SKIS

Just a reminder, that many years ago Lake Association Members agreed not to encourage jet ski ownership on the lake and that renters should also be alerted

to that fact. Nevertheless, we still get a few every year (many of them day trippers), Should you own one, or your renters bring one, please be considerate of other boaters and folks on shore and remind your renters of the same. FYI-Circling off the end of a dock is illegal (they must be at least 100 feet off any dock).

USE OF WATERVALE BEACHES/OUTLET

Just a reminder that the Lake Michigan Beach between the Outlet and Watervale Road, and the shortline from the Outlet to the Watervale properties is private property. They graciously allow lake residents to use these amazing areas. Please be considerate of Watervale guests and stop by the Inn to get a sticker for your watercraft. Finally, beach fires by non-guests are not allowed.

Changes in Lower Herring Lake Shoreline: Comparing the 2020 Drone Survey to the 2025 Survey

Last summer (2025), we commissioned Dennis Wiand of Zero Gravity to carry out a shoreline survey of Lower Herring Lake (LHL), using aerial drone video. This is the second shoreline survey, giving us a 5-year comparison of the shoreline status in 2025 to previously, in 2020. Marine biologist Kelsey Froelich, of Freshwater Solutions, analyzed the land-use patterns, and summarized major 5-year changes in our lakeshore. This report also compares LHL with other inland lakes. The full report is available to LHLA members.

Two highlights of shoreline changes in the 5-year period stand out:

- 1) First, a lesser percentage of the lake's shoreline was classified as "Natural Shoreline" (natural vegetation, not modified by humans) in 2025 over 2020. This percentage (10%) was offset by a comparable *increase* in 2025 compared with 2020, in what was classified as "Greenbelt" (this is vegetation, mostly native, that acts as a buffer zone between a lawn and the lake). This change seems to show the effect of the high lake level in 2020, that had receded by 2025: over this period, new vegetation would be regrowing along the exposed shoreline adjacent to the lake

edge. This is a positive finding, indicating stable stewardship and naturally-regrowing shoreline in a good portion of the lake shore (almost 50% of total shoreline).

- 2) The most significant negative trend identified in the 2025 shoreline was a dramatic increase in "Beach Sanding" (sand brought in to create or extend a beach area), a change of 20% of LHL shoreline since 2020. Replanting or allowing shoreline to regrow as "Greenbelt" is a better choice. Replacing shoreline vegetation with pure sand can lead to erosion, that can further degrade the lake and adjacent land over time.

The shoreline surveys give us a baseline of information about our lake and riparian stewardship going into the future. These video surveys contain a wealth of information that can give us more insight into the ecology of our lake. And as a path forward in shoreline stewardship for LHLA members, we will be adding articles and websites on natural shoreline restoration, to the LHLA website (lowerherringlakeassociation.org), under Resources. See also the website for Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership for excellent information.

Alison Berry

A Day at Camp Lookout, Told by the Sounds

Before the first bell, the lake belongs to the birds and fishermen in their boats. Mist on the water, a fish jumping somewhere near your dock, the pines holding their breath. Then, you know the sound, eight o'clock, and the wake-up bell rings out across the lake. Kids and staff are rolling out of bunks on the far shore getting ready for another day.

Half an hour later, another bell: breakfast. If the wind is right, you can almost hear the clatter of the dining hall, the laughter, the occasional chant of a table that's decided today is somebody's birthday.

Then the bell rings again for morning activities, and by mid-morning the lake comes alive. White sails lean out from the Western Shore sometimes zigzagging, occasionally in circles, always earnestly. Canoes head out in pairs for a trip to Boohoo with their rhythmic thunk of paddles on gunwales as a crew finds its stride drifting across the water, or the distant "ready... GO!" of a relay on the waterfront.

On certain mornings you'll see something grander: a long line of small heads trailed by paddleboards and a pontoon boat, getting ready for the Across the Lake Swim. Later in the summer comes the "Whale Swim", a swim down the full length of the lake, one stroke at a time, the boat beside every swimmer. If you cheer from your dock, they'll hear it. A good wave from shore has been known to carry a tired swimmer all the way to the next mark.

Afternoons have a rhythm of their own. More sails. More canoes. The slap of paddles, the whistle of the waterfront director, the group of artists creating their latest masterpiece on the waterfront.

At four-thirty, the bell brings everyone back to the water for free swim, and it sounds exactly like what it is: pure joy. A quieter hour follows while everyone changes and catches their breath. Then the dinner bell, and the dining hall gets loud in the particular way only a dining hall full of happy campers can.

And then, the evening. This can be our loudest hour, and we owe you the explanation. The evening program could be an all-camp, all-out running-around game with a creative twist, often involving costumes, face paint, and maybe a sea monster or werewolf. If it sounds like everyone is having the time of their lives, it's because they are.

Somewhere in there, one last bell for lights out. The lake goes still. The birds come back. And tomorrow morning, at eight sharp, we'll do it all over again.

Thank you for sharing the shoreline with us. When our campers come back twenty years later and tell us the lake sounds exactly the same, they mean the birds, and the pines, and, whether you know it or not, you.

Curtis McFall



Manage your LHLA membership online.
<https://www.lowerherringlakeassociation.org/giving>

Or mail the following information to the address below.

First / Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____

(We need a valid email address for occasional correspondence)

Lake Address: _____

Permanent Mailing Address: _____

Contact Phone #: _____

Membership Category and Annual Dues

- RIPARIAN (\$150)
- ASSOCIATE-NON VOTING (\$50)
- ASSOCIATE-VOTING (\$150)*

**Eligibility determined annually and on first come-first serve basis by June 15 of each membership year. If Member doesn't qualify the LHLA will refund the difference in cost between the voting and non-voting membership.*

Alternately, you can remit annual dues by:

- Check by mail
- Online PayPal/Credit Card (same link as above)
- or in person at the Annual Membership Meeting in July.

LHLA, PO Box 11, Frankfort, MI 49635.

Questions? Contact: lowerherringla@gmail.com

Lower Herring Lake



Association

P.O. Box 11
Frankfort, MI 49635

Board of Directors & Terms

2023 - 2026

Paul Schwartz	708-203-6245
Marilyn Raymond	248-763-5343
Mike Pringle	231-590-7969

2024-2027

Allison Berry	530-902-7294
Todd Frank	847-722-8253
Peter Turner	919-357-2773

2025 - 2028

Heather Danby	312-925-4927
Curtis McFall	734-476-5118
Mark Coleman	616-856-0341

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Watervale Welcome

Watervale welcomes our lake friends and neighbors to Summer! Lake Michigan beach and boat passes are available at the Inn. It is helpful to reach out before you come over (231.352.9083 or frontdesk@watervaleinn.com). We look forward to seeing you.

We know everyone enjoys Lower Herring Lake and the Lake Michigan Beach, but we also encourage you to explore the beautiful surroundings nearby. A few of our favorites include: Elberta Dunes, Arcadia Marsh, Betsie Valley Trail and the Upper Herring Lake Preserve, and so many more. Check out the GTRLC or Sleeping Bear Dunes websites for inspiration.



www.LowerHerringLakeAssociation.org