



Protecting Lake Leelanau for Future Generations

For some months the board of the Association has worked tirelessly to find a long term solution to protect Lake Leelanau from aquatic invasive species, a threat which will require a sophisticated, intense and coordinated effort for years to come.

As we report on pages 6-8 of our Annual Report, the Association's members, volunteers and partners have worked together for the past two years to implement a carefully planned, science-based program to control the most fearsome threat to the lake, Eurasian watermilfoil or EWM. We are making good headway in this fight, and by this autumn we believe we will have reduced the size of the infestation of EWM in Lake Leelanau by about half—from approximately ten acres to five. Although we expect to continue to reduce the size of the remaining beds of EWM, it is important for everyone interested in the lake's health to understand that EWM will always be with us. It will be virtually impossible to eradicate the weed entirely.

There will be a continuing need to prevent the introduction and re-introduction of invasive species into Lake Leelanau through educational initiatives and through the construction and maintenance of boat cleaning stations. As a community, we will need to weigh the costs and benefits of keeping 11 public boat launch sites on Lake Leelanau open. As we evaluate the costs of installing boat cleaning stations at launch sites, it may make sense to have a public conversation about closing some of the lesser used sites to encourage boaters to use those equipped with boat cleaning stations, which will need to be purchased and installed at each of the busiest launch sites on the lake.

In addition, each year we will need to conduct a thorough survey of the lake using sonar scanning, drones, and other technologies to look for new infestations of EWM and other invasive species, some of which are potentially more troublesome and costly to address. These initiatives are not inexpensive, but these measures will pay off in the long run because they will enable us to identify and tackle threats to the lake before they gain a significant toehold in the lake and become even more costly to eradicate in the future.

As we have reported previously, the Association does not have the resources to continue to wage this battle alone. Because we saw no other viable means of securing an income stream needed to protect the lake for the foreseeable future, after months of study the Association's board voted unanimously to ask the members of the County's Board of Commissioners to consider forming a lake board to protect Lake Leelanau—a solution which has worked well for more than 100 lake communities in Michigan.



However, in an altogether unanticipated development, in mid-July the Association was approached by a group of families with a proposed solution which we believe is superior to a lake board: the formation of a public foundation which will have as its principal mission the protection of Lake Leelanau for future generations.

The families involved will work with the Association to lead a community-wide campaign to form and endow a foundation which will be named **Friends of Lake Leelanau**, whose sole beneficiary will be the Lake Leelanau Lake Association. The goal will be to raise a minimum of \$5 million, the income from which will be used to finance the prevention, monitoring and control of invasive species in Lake Leelanau.

The Association is deeply gratified by this outpouring of public interest in finding a solution to protecting Lake Leelanau. The families supporting this new foundation and the board of the Lake Association invite all individuals and organizations who care about Lake Leelanau to join in supporting **Friends of Lake Leelanau**—an extraordinary new institution which will seek to protect Lake Leelanau far into the future.

Tom Hiatt, President
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