

Upper Straits Clean Lake Association Summer Newsletter

Mission of the Upper Straits Clean Lake Association

Clean, clear, quality lake water is key to an enriched quality of life, higher property values, expanded recreational activity, and an inviting healthy habitat for a variety of wild life. Therefore, the Upper Straits Clean Lake Association is committed to the task of improving and protecting the water quality and enhancing recreational opportunities on Upper Straits lake. However, Upper Straits Lake water quality can only be maintained through continued vigilance and co-operation of all lake users and riparians to reduce or eliminate any type of contaminate either man-made or natural material from entering or existing in our lake water. Although the Upper Straits Clean Lake Association's primary focus is the improvement and protection of the Water Quality on Upper Straits Lake; we believe that through communication and social interaction with all lake users, riparians, and home owner/beach associations around the lake that we can create a bond of co-operation and friendliness that will benefit our total lake community.



History of Upper Straits Lake

- Upper Straits Lake in the early 1800's was named Lake Catherine later Straits Lake as described in the book "Song of the Heron"
- A 1947 Upper Straits Lake inventory map indicated two boat liveries and 62 cottages. There was Langdon's Beach, Camp Ground and Boat Livery, and Shaws Boat Rental and Fishing Supplies, which was at Pontiac Trail and Sunbeam. The only remaining evidence of Shaws Boat Livery is the concrete sea wall on the south side of the lake just east of the RC Bankers Bay.
- RC Bankers Island Association minutes from 1970 indicated that Upper Straits Lake was once considered the 7th cleanest lake in Michigan, later dropped to 17th.
- On the east end of Upper Straits Lake there was a canoe portage location where local Indians would portage over land so they could enter Orchard Lake, then Cass Lake, and the Clinton River system from the Straits Lakes and the Huron River system.
- The Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary at the east end of the lake was purchased from Cranbrook Schools. Marjorie Ward Strong originally owned the land.
- The Ward family owned a large quantity of land around Cass, Orchard, and Upper Straits Lakes. Mr. Ward and Colonel Strong were one of the first land developers selling property on Upper Straits Lake. There is a photograph of Upper Straits Lake property in a sales brochure published by Ward/Strong that shows an old tree that still exists on the north shore of Elmgate subdivision
- One of the oldest remaining cottages on the lake, built about 1928, is located in RC

Facts About Upper Straits Lake



Upper Straits Lake is the location of the only drawbridge in Oakland County, MI

- Dimensions 323 acres, length 1.7 miles, perimeter 6.24 miles
- Depth maximum 96 feet (sonar found one spot at 101 feet)
- Water quality better than average
- Upper Straits Lake is the location of the only drawbridge in Oakland County, MI
- SECHI Water Clarity Reading Depth 19.9 ft to 34.10 ft various locations May 2002
- Boat population approx 300
- Jet Ski population approx 90
- Households on the lake: 210
- Private Association Boat Ramps 4
- One Slalom Ski Course (mid lake) for all to use
- Speed Limit 55 mph Preferred max 40 mph
- Counter Clockwise Boat Traffic
- Legal Lake level 931.0 ft above sea level
- Environmental concerns: Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Water milfoil, Purple Loosestrife
- Water source – Spring fed & surface run off
- Lake level control Dam set at 931.0 ft above sea level (previously set at 930.8)
- Lake Temperature at surface
 - May — June — 61 to 72 degrees
 - July — August — 75 to 80 degrees
 - September — October — 78 to 57 degrees

Weed Harvesting



Each spring the Upper Straits Clean Lake Association asks for your donation to pay for the Weed Harvesting. Watch for the request in the mail in early spring or mark your May calendar to send in your contribution to the City of Orchard Lake Village WQIF.

Lake Care Guidelines to Protect Water Quality

If you want to reduce the amount of lake bottom muck, there is a product on the market named AQUACLEAR pellets.

Bacterial action in the pellets eat away at the bottom muck, reduce odor, and remove nitrogen sources which helps to reduce weed growth. We used the product last season and it works. To order call 800 328 9350.

Use a rake to remove near shore seaweed rather than chemicals for seaweed eradication. Weed removal reduces next year's nutrients in the water.

Keep your lake litter free. Remove bottles, cans, plastic, etc. from the water whenever and wherever possible.

Be sure that silt barriers are in place around all new construction. This prevents silt seepage from introducing large amounts of nutrients into the lake during heavy rains. Call the City if you notice any silt barriers that are in disrepair.

Be careful to minimize the amount of gas or oil that spills into the lake when refueling or during minor maintenance of your watercraft.

Ask your dealer to use environmental friendly antifreeze when winterizing your boat engine.

Drain the antifreeze from the engine before returning your boat to the lake each spring.

Up to 30% of Jet Ski and two cycle engine toxic oils & gasoline fuel is dumped unburned into the water. One gallon pollutes thousands of gallons of water. In 7 hours a jet ski produces as many pollutants as a car driven 100,000 miles.

Suggestion: switch to a cleaner four cycle engine.



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plastic, etc. from the water
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**Shoreline landscaping
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Shoreline Degradation

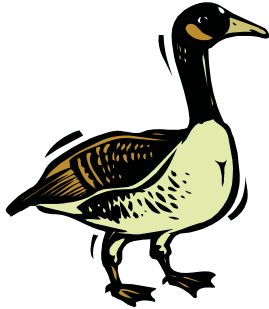
Shoreline landscaping destroys what Mother Nature took hundreds of years to create.

Obviously, the natural shoreline of a lake has been stable for hundreds of years. A combination of natural forces over the centuries of tree roots, shoreline vegetation and aquatic plants have strengthened the shoreline to the point that it can withstand surface water runoff, ice & wave action. Removing the natural shoreline vegetation or changing the slope of the bank de-stabilize the shoreline allowing surface water runoff to erode the soil & carry water quality degrading nutrients directly into the lake. Native shoreline vegetation & aquatic plants are a buffer zone slowing down the run off & absorbing the nutrients through the root systems as well as holding soil firmly in place. The cattails, sedges, & bulrushes absorb & dissipate wave energy preventing shoreline erosion.

This is why the city & DNR consider the shoreline landscape within 35 ft of the water as the environmentally sensitive zone. Obviously, each homeowner should prioritize his landscape changes based on the overall impact on the shoreline & water quality. Every lake front owner should consider planting a buffer zone of native shoreline vegetation at the water edge.

City permits are required for landscaping within 35 ft of the water.

Canadian Geese & Water Quality



Canadian Geese droppings have also been attributed to increased bacterial counts in beach water tests.

Canadian Geese are a natural part of the wild life of a lake habitat. They are a joy to observe on our lakes and ponds. However, with no natural predators in our immediate area, they can reproduce to the point that they become an environmental and public nuisance.

It is estimated that one goose can produce enough feces contaminant in a season that is equivalent to dumping a 50 lb. bag of fertilizer in the lake. Multiply the single goose's 50 lb bag of "fertilizer" by 50 or more geese and the amount of "fertilizer" put in the lake in one season is more than excessive, in fact it is disastrous. Canadian Geese droppings have also been attributed to increased bacterial counts in beach water tests.

Every home owner on the lake can attest to the excess amount of messy droppings left by a group of geese feeding on the lawn & beach areas. The droppings require a through clean-up or a lot of fancy footwork when walking on the lawn.

Fortunately, each spring Mark & Gayle Hoffman with the prior approval of the DNR, have taken up the task of reducing the Canadian Geese population on Upper Straits Lake through an Egg Replacement or Nest Destruction Program.

Since 1998 they have collected 202 eggs. Call or email Mark or Gayle Hoffman 248.681.1473 or @ mghoffman@comcast.net and alert them to any spring nesting geese on your property

"removing 35 to 40 truck loads of weeds from the lake each summer"

Annual Weed Harvesting

Weed harvesting is an important lake maintenance activity that is done every year to remove the weeds that can clog boat propellers, restrict swimming, and stagnate the lake water.

By removing 35 to 40 truck loads of weeds from the lake each summer, we alleviate the immediate problem plus reduce the amount of dead weeds that sink to the bottom of the lake each autumn. Lowering the amount of weeds sinking to the bottom reduces the amount of nutrient laden plant matter that could decay and become fertilizer for the following years plant growth.

Also, decaying plant material takes large amounts of oxygen out of the water making it unlivable for most fish.

The Upper Straits Clean Lake Association prefers weed harvesting over chemical controls using aquatic herbicides. We believe minimizing the introduction of additional chemicals into our lake water will keep our water as pure as possible. Additionally, aquatic herbicides kill weeds that eventually drop to the lake bottom to become nutrients for next years growth; thereby compounding the weed problem. Aquatic herbicides are also harmful to young fish population.

The problem weed in Upper Straits Lake is Eurasian Water milfoil in the water and Purple Loosestrife on the shore.



Local Boat Storage Requirements

Orchard Lake Ordinance Section 4.41 Boat Storage

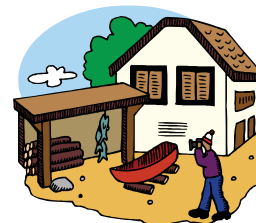
The requirement in this Section shall apply to boats of any type (motor craft or sailboat) that are over fourteen (14) feet in length. No more than two (2) boats shall be stored on any residential-zoned lot or parcel, provided that no such boat shall exceed thirty (30) feet in length and ten (10) feet in height, and provided further that, where feasible, such boats shall be stored in a location that is screened from view from the road. Boats may be stored on trailers.

Section 11.03.04 Article IV Boat Dockage Regulations

Section 4.1 Subject to the provisions below, not more than two (2) boats shall be launched and/or docked adjacent to each separate frontage

Section 4.2 If the continuous length of a separate frontage is greater than 150 feet, one (1) additional boat may be launched and/or docked for each 100 feet of continuous frontage in excess of the initial 150 feet. For purposes of computing the length of frontage, the measurement shall be along the water's edge at the legal level of the lake, as determined by the Department of Natural Resources or, if the Department has determined, in the discretion of the City. Moreover, the measurement shall be made only along a natural shoreline, and shall not include any man-made channel, lagoon, canal or the like.

Section 4.3 Following the effective date of this Ordinance, no launching and/or docking shall be permitted with respect to a separate frontage of less than 100 feet, provided, this provision shall not apply to lots or parcels constituting a building site of record prior to the effective date of this Ordinance. (ord. No. 11.03 eff. July 11, 1988)



Caption describing picture or graphic.

West Bloomfield Ordinance Section 10-103 Owners of riparian lots

The owners of riparian lots that are developed with a single family residence shall, without the necessity of petition, be allowed to store not more than two (2) boats and/or watercraft together with their trailers subject to the following regulations:

1. Boat and watercraft storage may be in the lake yard and must be entirely within the lot.
2. Where storage is not possible under subsection 1, boat and watercraft storage may be in the side yard, but not within the minimum side yard setback as prescribed in the Zoning Ordinance, as amended, for the district in which the property is situated.
3. Where storage is not possible under subsections 1 or 2 boat and watercraft storage may be in the street yard and must be entirely within the lot, and, at least ten (10) feet from the edge of the right-of-way on the road side of the premises. Docks, boat lifts and boat hoists may be stored only in the lake yard.

If you would like to assist in working on any of the events or have any ideas on improving water quality, let us know.

Membership

Please use the Contact form on the website to add your email address and indicate your interest in becoming a member. Your participation will be most welcomed!

SUPPORT THE UPPER STRAITS CLEAN LAKE ASSOCIATION WITH YOUR \$25 ANNUAL DONATION

Only your annual dues, fundraisers, & contributions fund the Upper Straits Clean Lake Association.

To keep the Association functioning, we need your support!!

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WATER POLLUTION CONTROL GUIDELINES

New home construction silt seepage phosphorus & other chemical nutrients from lawn fertilizers are a major source of lake pollution increasing algae & aquatic weed growth & consequently decreasing water quality.

An MSU aquatic expert estimates that just one pound of phosphorous could support 775 pounds of aquatic weed growth each season.

LAWN CARE GUIDELINES TO PROTECT OUR WATER QUALITY

Use Non Phosphate lawn fertilizer on all lake front lawns.

- Mix code should be N-P-K of 20-0-10 or 25-0-11.
City Law prohibits fertilizing within 25 ft of the lake water.

Use slow release fertilizer & apply sparingly – never before a rain.

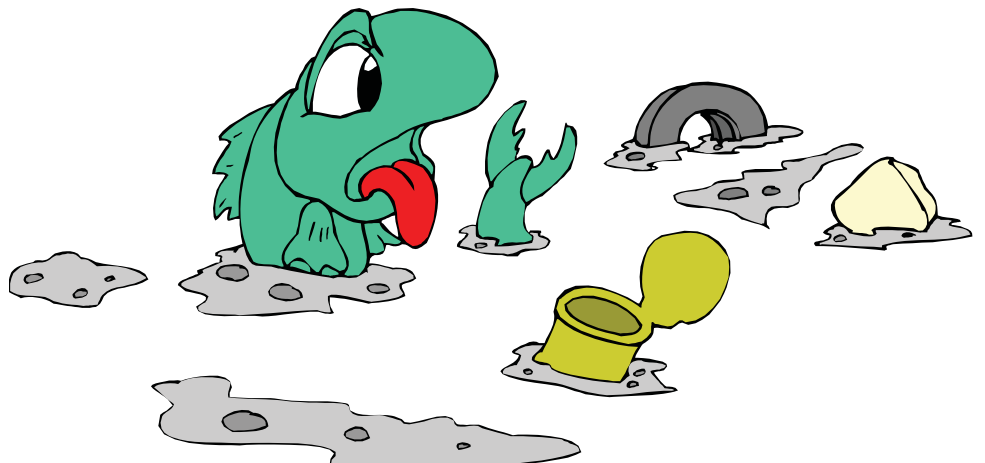
Verify that your lawn service is approved by the City of Orchard Lake Village or West Bloomfield Township and is using Non Phosphate Fertilizers.

Don't ever allow fertilizer to land directly into the lake water.

Keep fertilizer off any concrete or asphalt surfaces. Sweep or blow fertilizer back onto the lawn. Rain-water can wash these materials off the pavement & could potentially impact the water.

A height of 3.5 inches is a general recommendation for mowing grass near the lakeshore to reduce nutrient flow into the water.

Do not allow grass clippings to reach the lake water!! This is like throwing fertilizer into the lake.



If you can't find any "0" Zero phosphate fertilizers the following is a list of low phosphate slow release fertilizers recommended by the Dept of Environment & MI State Univ.

- Corn Gluten Meal 9-0-0
- Ringer Lawn Restorer 10-2-6
- Fertell Lawn Fertilizer 9-1-4
- Pursell's Sta- Green 31-2-4
- Vigoro Lawn Fertilizer 31-2-4

Check and correct septic fields for leakage into the lake.

BOATING SAFETY GUIDELINES



- Safety on the lake is everyone's responsibility... children, teenagers, and parents
- Most problems on the lake are caused by visitors and guest who are not familiar with our rules, safe boating guidelines, or craft operation.
- Before your friends or guests launch a boat or operate any watercraft, be sure they are aware of lake rules and safe boating guidelines and are familiar with the operation of the craft.



- Remember the owner of a personal watercraft is liable for any injury caused by a negligent operator.
- Jet Skis account for only 20% of the boat population but account for more than 44% of all boat related injuries
- A copy of Michigan Personal Watercraft Regulations is available at the Secretary of State office or at any boat dealer. Call the Sheriff Patrol, Marine Division at 248 391 0256 and they will send you the information.
- It is unlawful to operate a vessel that creates noise levels above 75 decibels measured from on shore or 90 decibels at idle from 3 ft away
- All traffic must circle the lake in a counter-clockwise direction (Boats, Tow Boats, & Jet Skis).
- Boat and Jet Skis speeds should be kept under 40 mph (speed limit is 55 mph)
- There must be life jackets for everyone on board
- For all motorized craft, there must be an operating fire extinguisher on board
- A person under 12 years of age shall not operate a personal watercraft in this state
- Boats must pass to the right of oncoming traffic
- Lights must be displayed after dusk
- After dark cruise must be a Slow or No Wake speed
- Jet Skis should not operate on the lake after dark or one hour before sunset to sunrise
- Power boats and Jet Skis should stay at least 100 feet from the ski course, fishing boats, or sail boats
- Know the lake to avoid shallow areas, such as, Entrance to Elmgate Bay, NE shoreline, Sandbar opposite Straits Lake Beach, SE shoreline Whispering Pines
- Stay a minimum of 100 ft from swimming areas, buoys, and rafts
- Water ski boats must have an observer while pulling a skier or persons on float tubes
- Cruising boater must give right of way to boats towing or sailboats
- Never exceed the boats published passenger capacity or weight limit

