



# The GLQO Watershed Journal

The mission of the Gull Lake Quality Organization is to address concerns and provide education regarding the use of natural resources of the Gull Lake Watershed.

Volume 4, Issue 3

<http://www.glqo.net>

June-July, 2010

## Upcoming Events

### July 2010

13th—Community Forum 6:00PM  
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy  
Woodlawn Preserve Community Forum  
KBS Carriage House

**Mark Those Calendars!!**

The GLQO Annual Meeting is **July 14th** at the **Richland Area Community Center**

14th—GLQO Annual Meeting 7:00 PM  
**Guest Speaker: Sarah VanDelfzijl**  
**Michigan DNRE**  
**Richland Area Community Center**

### August 2010

25th—GLQO Board Meeting 6:30 PM  
Check website for details

29th—GLQO Ice Cream Social 1:00PM  
KBS Manor House Grounds

## **Save The Date!!**

The Second Annual  
GLQO Ice Cream Social  
is scheduled for **Sunday,**  
**August 29th from**  
**1:00PM to 5:00PM**  
at the  
**Kellogg Biological**  
**Station Manor House**  
**Grounds**

Free Pontoon Boat Rides!

## **GLQO On The Watch**

*By Mike Gallagher, Water Quality Committee Chair*

**Editor's note:** Following up on Mike's article in the September 2009 issue of the Watershed Journal, this Secchi disk-based testing is the first phase of GLQO's water quality testing initiative.

Until we measure something, we don't we really know what we have. To therefore find out the quality of Gull Lake, Little Long Lake and the watershed, the GLQO is doing more sampling and measurements than ever before. Our simplest test measures water clarity at eight locations on Gull and one location on Little Long. We usually see down about 34 feet in Gull in the spring and 8-10 feet by late August. This year, though, volunteer Mike Marcinek of Wildwood recorded a clarity reading of 40 feet! That is the clearest that we have seen in years.

In our second year of working with the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP), we are now also measuring chlorophyll, phosphorous, temperature and dissolved oxygen from the surface to 100 feet. Take a look at this site to learn more about this program and the testing results for Gull Lake and other Michigan lakes:

[http://www.mi-water-cmp.org/cooperative\\_lakes\\_monitoring\\_pro.htm](http://www.mi-water-cmp.org/cooperative_lakes_monitoring_pro.htm)

Your GLQO Board of Directors has also put together a surface water monitoring program for the watershed. By sampling and testing surface water at 11 locations within the watershed (including sites on Little Long Lake and along Prairieville Creek), we hope to develop a baseline measurement of the current quality of the surface water. That water reaches the lakes that we enjoy and is one of the first indicators of their quality in the future. The recent establishment of two CAFOs on the west side of Little Long Lake, continued housing development, aging septic systems along many of the watershed lakes and an increase in boats trailered from lake to lake are just a few of the reasons why we need to keep a watchful eye on our water quality.

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# GLQO On The Watch

(continued)

Our friends at the Kellogg Biological Station are a huge help in watching over our watershed. Dr. Steve Hamilton and Steve Allen have gathered data for years on the runoff water that enters Gull Lake from many different locations. While they keep their eye on that Gull Lake water source, Jeff Reicherts, a surface water specialist with Kalamazoo County, samples the stream water for E-coli.

So far, our testing tells us that we have one gem of lake sitting in the middle of a healthy watershed. No startling test results indicate any cause for alarm at this time. The biggest culprit that has reduced the quality of many lakes in the watershed is invasive aquatic species- -weeds. Gull Lake has been lucky and so far our invasive weed problems are very limited. What can you do to help? Clean your boat before you launch it. Empty your bilge water so that you don't transfer weed seeds from one lake to another. Empty your live wells before leaving a lake. Become familiar and on the lookout for invasive species — they are all displayed on the CLMP website.

Even with the help of many volunteers this program will still cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 in the first year, and we hope we can count on your support. We will continue to measure the quality, observe changes and communicate with members and riparians with the goal of preserving our enjoyable watershed and lake quality.



Mike Tracy helping Dad with Secchi Disk readings on Gull Lake *Photo by Chris Tracy*

## Water Clarity Volunteers 2010

### **Gull Lake**

Woody Boudeman  
Anne Couture  
Dan Gallagher  
Mike Gallagher  
Mike Marcinek  
Jerry Rapp  
Eric Reid  
Chris & Mike Tracy

### **Little Long Lake**

Kappy Boudeman  
Susan Houseman  
Gary Mittlebach  
Steve Winquist

## Learn More About Invasive Weed Species

The good news? These invasive weed species have not (to our knowledge) reached any of the waters of the Gull Lake Watershed. The bad news? That could change tomorrow, unless we are **all** vigilant. If you see any of these, please let the Michigan DNR or the GLQO know!



Eurasian Watermilfoil



Hydrilla



Curly Leaf Pondweed

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## Floodplain Map Changes May Impact Watershed Residents

By Thomas A. Smith, Prein&Newhof

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**Editor's note:** Current FEMA maps denote Gull Lake and Grassy Lake (behind Cotter's Ridge) as potential Flood Hazard Areas. While the GLQO wants its members in Kalamazoo County to be aware of these floodplain map updates, this article does not constitute an endorsement by the GLQO of Prein&Newhof.

Is your lender suddenly requiring flood insurance?

FEMA recently updated its Kalamazoo County floodplain maps, called Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs). If you have a mortgage, your lender will be reviewing the new maps to see if you appear to be in the floodplain. If you are, your lender will require you to purchase flood insurance (this isn't covered by home owner's insurance).

Unfortunately, some homeowners within the Gull Lake Watershed are now being asked to buy flood insurance – even if their homes aren't truly in the floodplain. In most cases, these new maps are more accurate than the previous versions, but they can have inaccuracies, and lenders can misread them. Fortunately, there is a process to amend the maps. If you think the map is inaccurate, you bear the burden of proving that your home isn't in the floodplain.

So how do you get this proof? If you think your home has been wrongly placed in a floodplain, you will need the help of a Professional Surveyor or Professional Engineer to conduct a Flood Zone Survey and prepare the necessary FEMA documentation. This process has four steps.

1. A surveyor surveys the property and completes an Elevation Certificate, which lists the type of structure, elevations at various locations, and base information about the structures.
2. An engineer compares the survey data with the FEMA map and determines if the structure is actually in the floodplain.
3. If the DFIRM is inaccurate, the engineer will prepare an application for Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA or eLOMA), asking that the structure be removed from the floodplain. The LOMA (or eLOMA) is submitted to FEMA.
4. If FEMA approves the LOMA and changes the official map, you can submit it to your mortgage provider. The approved LOMA is required by your mortgage provider to prove that the flood risk is less than indicated by the FEMA map. Obtaining a LOMA does not guarantee you won't be required to obtain flood insurance, but it will guarantee a reduced rate (often at least 10%).

Depending on the circumstances, the costs for obtaining an Elevation Certificate and LOMA typically ranges from \$300 to \$1,200.

Both the Gull Lake Association and the Gull Lake Quality Organization have spoken with Prein&Newhof (<http://www.preinnewhof.com>) about the possibility of preparing one LOMA for numerous Gull Lake properties. The more properties involved, the lower the cost for individual home owners will be.

If you have questions about this process or the letter you received, contact Tom Smith, P.E., CFM, of Prein&Newhof at 616-364-8491 or [tsmith@preinnewhof.com](mailto:tsmith@preinnewhof.com). Tom is also planning on attending the July 14 GLQO Annual Meeting to answer questions and get your feedback.

More information on Elevations Certificates and LOMAs can be found at:

<http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/elvinst.shtm>

[http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/fmc\\_loma.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/fmc_loma.shtm)

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## Partner Spotlight—Donating Conservation Easements

By *Emily Wilke, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy*

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Many people are driven to donate a conservation easement on their land because they want to ensure that the property they have grown to love never turns into a subdivision or shopping mall. However, knowing that the property will always be conserved and leaving a family legacy are not the only benefits to donating a conservation easement. There are also significant tax advantages. The property owners/donors can take a federal income tax deduction for the value of the qualified donation, and may also receive breaks on federal estate taxes and potentially property taxes.



A conservation easement is a legal agreement which is recorded to the property deed in perpetuity that prohibits development and protects identified conservation values. Conservation values are a critical component, defined in the IRS tax code, and the basis for why IRS qualified organizations, such as, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy protect land and allow landowners to be eligible for a federal tax deduction with a conservation easement donation.

To determine the potential income tax deduction for a donated conservation easement the property owner hires a qualified appraiser who will appraise the property at its highest and best use, the unrestricted value, and then appraise the property with the restrictions of the conservation easement in place. The difference between those two values is considered a charitable donation for your personal federal income taxes which is currently up to 50% of your adjusted gross income (AGI). If the entire value of the donation is not used in the first year, the excess can be carried forward and deducted (with the 50% limit) for up to 15 additional years. If you are considered a qualified farmer, deriving more than 50% of your income from farming practices, then you can take a 100% AGI deduction. The actual income tax savings realized is a function of your income tax bracket (see the example below).

Another incentive to placing a conservation easement on your property is the potential estate tax breaks. Too often, when the next generation inherits the family-owned land, they have to unwillingly split up the property and sell a portion of it to pay the estate taxes. A conservation easement donor is eligible for an exclusion from estate tax of up to \$500,000. In 2010 this is not applicable because there are no estate taxes; however, starting in 2011, the estate tax will be reinstated.

The final tax incentive to placing a conservation easement on your property is a property tax break for the next landowners. When transferring property on to the next generation, the property tax is uncapped and reassessed with the taxable rate readjusting or “popping-up” to the SEV, increasing the tax rate and property taxes. With Public Act 446 passed in 2006, all properties with a conservation easement are exempt from the “pop-up” tax. If a property has been under one ownership for a long time and accrues value without the property taxes raising more than 5% from one year to the next, at transfer the taxes can “pop-up” significantly. Placing a conservation easement on a property to keep the cap in place can be a strong incentive in the marketing of a property to potential buyers (see the example below).

This is a brief overview of the tax advantages of placing a conservation easement on your property. To determine how a conservation easement donation may affect your taxes, you need to consult your own professional tax and/or legal advisor. If you would like more information about conservation easements and the steps to conserving your property, contact Emily Wilke, Director of Land Protection, at the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy at [ewilke@swmlc.org](mailto:ewilke@swmlc.org) or 269-324-1600.

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## Gull Lake—Site of *Certified Natural Shoreline Professional* Training

By Jane Herbert, District Water Quality Educator, MSU Kellogg Biological Station

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Another natural shoreline has been constructed on Gull Lake. The project, located in Wildwood, was coordinated by Jane Herbert, KBS, and served as the field component of a new training course entitled *Certified Natural Shoreline Professional* (CNSP).

Natural shoreline landscaping and erosion control (sometimes called lakescaping) reduces pollutant runoff, deters geese and restores near shore fish and wildlife habitat. Gull Lake property owners in search of a shoreline contractor that understands natural shoreline landscape design and erosion control will soon be able to access a list of certified contractors (many from the Kalamazoo area) on the website of the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership (MNSP). The list will include landscape contractors and marine contractors that have successfully completed the four-day CNSP training and certification exam.

As a member of the MNSP, Herbert provided leadership to course development and instruction. Other members of the partnership include Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) staff, representatives from the landscape and marine construction industries, trade associations, academic institutions and non-profit organizations. MNSP certifies that contractors have attended the four-day training course (three days classroom and one day field) and have passed the certification exam.



Contractors working in small groups practice natural shoreline design concepts during *Certified Natural Shoreline Professional* in Kalamazoo. Photo by Jane Herbert

A total of fifty-six people from around the state attended the new course at one of the two locations offered this year – Kalamazoo and Pontiac. During the classroom session they learned about ‘green’ landscape design, bioengineered erosion control, shoreline environments, lake health and shoreline permits. The session included a training manual and small group activities during which participants learned to design natural shorelines.

The field component provided participants with hands-on experience constructing a natural shoreline. They worked with native plants, erosion control blankets and bioengineered erosion control in the form of biodegradable logs that protect plantings from wave and ice action until they can get established. A grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation paid for the plants and bioengineering materials – keeping down course registration fees.



Putting that training into practice in Wildwood. Photo by Eric Reid

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## Gull Lake—Site of *Certified Natural Shoreline Professional* Training

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Ed Schmitt, a marine contractor who owns Trident Dock & Dredge, Inc. in Watervliet, Michigan is a member of MNSP and sees bioengineering as a viable alternative to rock riprap and vertical sea walls on low to moderate energy shorelines. Both Ed and his son, Matt, attended the Kalamazoo course and found it provided a balanced and technically sound approach to bioengineered shoreline erosion control. He regards this new technology as a way to expand his business and respond to the new green economy in Michigan by offering 'soft' shoreline erosion control techniques to his customers.

MNSP has assisted the DNRE in developing a new Bioengineering Minor Permit for *low energy sites* on inland lakes. The DNRE plans to issue the new permit category in the next few months and it will enable property owners to obtain permits more quickly for soft shoreline projects. MNSP is also working on homeowner education materials and is providing leadership to natural shoreline research and demonstration in Michigan.

The partnership is already making plans to offer CNSP in 2011 – locations to be determined. Shoreline property owners looking for more information about MNSP can go to the partnership's website at <http://www.michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu/MichiganNaturalShorelinePartnership.aspx>. Those looking to hire a Certified Natural Shoreline Professional should watch for the list on this same site. For more information about the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership and its activities contact Jane Herbert at [jherbert@msu.edu](mailto:jherbert@msu.edu).

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### Historian's Corner

By: *The GLQO Historian* ([historian@glqo.net](mailto:historian@glqo.net))

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**Editor's Note:** We briefly considered running this under 'Lost and Found'...



*Photo by Eric Reid*

Our own Chris Tracy pulled this metal rudder out of Gull Lake recently. Is this yours? Do you know anything about it, perhaps on what type of craft it originated? Please let us know! (That's a two-foot measuring level in the picture to show scale.)

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### A Successful Dessert With Discussion

By: *Eric Reid, Communication/PR Committee*

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The GLQO co-sponsored the April 27 Dessert with Discussion talk at MSU's Kellogg Biological Station. Dr. Elena Litchman gave a very enlightening talk on Harmful Algal Blooms in light of Global Warming. These blooms do happen from time to time in our Watershed's lakes, and these can be harmful to humans and animals. Oh yes, the desserts were quite tasty as well!



*Photo by Eric Reid*

# Gull Lake Quality Organization

## 2010 Dues Request

*The mission of the Gull Lake Quality Organization is to address concerns and provide education regarding the use of natural resources of the Gull Lake Watershed.*

Please take a moment to provide your contact information below and ...

**THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!!**

(Please print all information and provide your local mailing address)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

It is not our policy to share your home address information, phone numbers or E-mail address with any other individuals or organizations. However, we do normally publish the names (only) of our members on our website.

- Check here if you do not wish to have your name published on the GLQO website.
- Check here if you would like to receive The GLQO Watershed Journal by email.

### Individual/Family Membership

\_\_\_ Regular (\$35) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Supporting (\$50 to \$100) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Sponsor (\$125 & Over) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Corporate Membership

\_\_\_ Silver (\$50) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Gold (\$100 to \$200) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Platinum (\$250 & Over) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Additional Donations:*

\_\_\_ General Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Sheriff's Patrol \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Water Quality Testing \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ General Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Sheriff's Patrol \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Water Quality Testing \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Check here if you wish to have your donation level kept confidential.

Please mail this form and your check to: GLQO, P.O. Box 34, Hickory Corners, MI 49060

If you have comments or suggestions we would like to hear from you!!  
Please visit our website: <http://www.glqo.net>



[www.glqo.net](http://www.glqo.net)

## The Gull Lake Quality Organization's Board of Directors

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