THE GLQO WATERSHED JOURNAL

The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.

What's the Difference between the Gull Lake Quality Organization and the Gull Lake Dam Association?

By Gary Mittelbach

Two separate non-profit organizations work to help maintain the quality of life on Gull Lake. They are the **Gull Lake Quality Organization** and the **Gull Lake Dam Association**. Both organizations ask annually for your support to accomplish their goals and you might wonder how they differ, what exactly do they do, and why do I need to support them both? Outlined below is a brief history of each organization and a list of what they do today. Read on!

Gull Lake Quality Organization

The Gull Lake Quality Organization (GLQO) was founded in 1977, but it had its roots years earlier in a group of Gull Lake area women known as the Ladies of the Lake. In the 1960's, Clare Vanderploeg, Marion Longman and other members of the Ladies of the Lake became concerned that the waters of Gull Lake were becoming murky and green. They understood that phosphorous inputs from septic tanks, lawn fertilizer and laundry detergents were likely fueling increased algal growth and the decline in water clarity and they circulated information about the harmful effects of too much phosphorous on lakes. Importantly, data collected by Drs. Robert Wetzel and George Lauff and graduate student David Tague of MSU's Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) provided the hard evidence that high phosphorous inputs to Gull Lake were in fact the culprit behind diminishing water quality. The efforts of the GLQO (particularly Fred Buckley), along with KBS scientists and the Ladies of the Lake, helped lay the groundwork for the successful funding and construction of the Gull Lake Sewer project in the early 1980's. The construction of the Gull Lake Sewer, along with a ban on phosphorous in laundry detergents (and later lawn fertilizers), turned the tide and these efforts are responsible for the crystal-clear waters found now once again in Gull Lake.

WINTER 2021

In This Issue:

The Gull Lake Quality Organization is an all-volunteer organization. Our mission is to address concerns and provide education regarding the use of natural resources of the Gull Lake Watershed.

Board Member, Gary Mittelbach was caught taking time off to enjoy the ice!!!!

What's the Difference?

Continued From Page 1

Today the Gull Lake Quality Organization supports many projects aimed at improving the quality of life on Gull Lake and other the lakes and streams in the Gull Lake watershed. Among the things the GLQO is currently involved in are:

- Installing, maintaining and staffing a boat wash at the Gull Lake public landing at Prairieville Township Park for the past four summers.
- Monitoring water quality in Gull Lake and Little Long Lake for over 12 years.
- Funding aquatic plant surveys of Gull Lake and Little Long Lake for the purpose of detecting invasive plant species.
- Coordinating spot treatment of the invasive plant Starry Stonewort in Gull Lake.
- GLQO also works closely with local, township, regional and state partners to provide a voice for all within the watershed.
- Communications include the quarterly GLQO newsletter sent to all members and a website and Facebook page.

Contact information for the GLQO can be found at the end of this newsletter, along with a list of current members and Board members of the GLQO.

Gull Lake Dam Association

The Gull Lake Dam Association maintains and operates the Gull Lake Dam located on Gull Creek near N 37th St. and E DE Avenue. This dam regulates the water level of Gull Lake. Without the dam, lake levels and shoreline locations would fluctuate markedly with changes in climate and precipitation. The original Gull Lake Dam was constructed in the early 1830's to power a sawmill, and it is estimated that the dam raised the level of Gull Lake by about 14 feet and nearly doubled the lake's size. In the 1880's, the dam was upgraded to a sluice gate structure and was used by the Price Cereal Food Co. until its closure in 1906, after which the dam began to deteriorate. In 1921, the Gull Lake Dam Association (known then as the Gull Lake Association) stepped in and acquired the dam, which it continues to operate to this day. In May 2019, fundraising was initiated to replace the Gull Lake Dam after inspections revealed that the existing dam had reached the end of its functional life. These fundraising efforts successfully raised the money needed to build a new dam (dam construction began in October 2020 and completion is scheduled for May 2021). See Page 5 for the dam construction update.

Ongoing activities of the Gull Lake Dam Association include:

- Adjust dam setting for seasonal lake levels (i.e., lower lake level in the winter).
- Monitor weather to facilitate adjusting dam settings.
- Maintain the dam and its property grounds.
- Authorize dam safety inspections every 5 years.
- Hold annual Gull Lake Dam Association members meeting to share the following:
    - Year-end review of dam operation and maintenance.
    - View of income and operating expenses.
    - Discuss long-term capital plans as appropriate.

Contact the Gull Lake Dam Association via their website https://gulllakedam.org/contact/

Gull Lake is a Popular Bass Fishing Tournament Location

By Brook Wilke, Fisheries Chair and edited by Matt Diana, DNR

Did you know that Gull Lake is one of the most popular lakes in Michigan for bass fishing leagues and tournaments? The popularity of Gull Lake for these tournaments has risen over the past decade, increasing from 32 to 60 tournaments between 2016-2018. The number of tournaments has plateaued since 2018 but remains at or near the top relative to other Michigan lakes. Over the past three years, there have been an average of 55 officially documented individual competitions per year that have launched from the Prairieville Township Park. Below is a list that shows how Gull Lake compares to other local lakes according to the officially reported events in 2020.

- Gull Lake – 57 tournaments
- Gun Lake – 52
- Austin Lake – 32
- Pine Lake – 31
- Upper Crooked Lake – 25
- Fine Lake – 14
- Lower Crooked Lake – 2

The information for these tournaments is available to the public through a State of Michigan website: http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/fishingtournaments/. The majority of these tournaments on Gull Lake occur between June and August on weekend mornings or weekday evenings and include between 10-20 boats. Many of them are part of season-long leagues or competitions that use a number of different lakes in the region.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist, Matt Diana is part of a task force that includes a group of university professors and biologists compiling and analyzing bass fisheries data to look for trends that could indicate need for management. This task force could also uncover information about why Gull Lake is such a popular site for these tournaments. Diana suggests a number of possible reasons including quality of fishing, access site and convenience.

The fish that are caught during the tournaments are kept in the livewells of the boats and brought back to the boat launch for weigh-in and recording. Fish are quickly brought to the weigh station and returned to the water alive. Diana reports that "as far as efforts taken in tournaments, practices have significantly improved over the years. Different clubs take different measures, but all realize the importance of maintaining the resource for their sport." Specifically, anglers use tactics such as livewell aeration/additives & limited air and sun exposure during weigh-in. Bass anglers are not allowed to use live bait, which limits the potential of deep hooking mortality. Diana concludes that "these techniques combined have resulted in very low estimates of delayed mortality associated with bass tournaments and most evidence points towards very low impact of this recreational activity on fish populations. The DNR is

Charlie Wilke holds a Gull Lake largemouth bass correctly (horizontally) for a quick picture before safe release back into the water.

Gull Lake is a Popular Bass Fishing Tournament Location *Continued From Page 3*

currently working on evaluating tournament activity as well as early season catch and release practices to determine if there are any trends that can inform management."

Recreational anglers often follow similar methods to maintain fish survival, but accidental challenges do occur. One of the most common problems is deep hooking of bass (a.k.a. swallowed hooks), particularly when fishing with live bait for bluegills or other panfish. In these scenarios, the hook is lodged in the throat of the bass and is difficult to remove without fatally wounding the fish. If the hook cannot be removed without damage, it is generally advised to cut the hook off. The hook may inhibit feeding by the fish, but depending on the hook material, it may also corrode or come free over time. Also remember to hold the fish horizontally and not vertically for pictures, and avoid discarding any used lures or plastic baits into the water. These plastic baits are often consumed by lake trout or northern pike and accumulate in the stomachs of these fish.

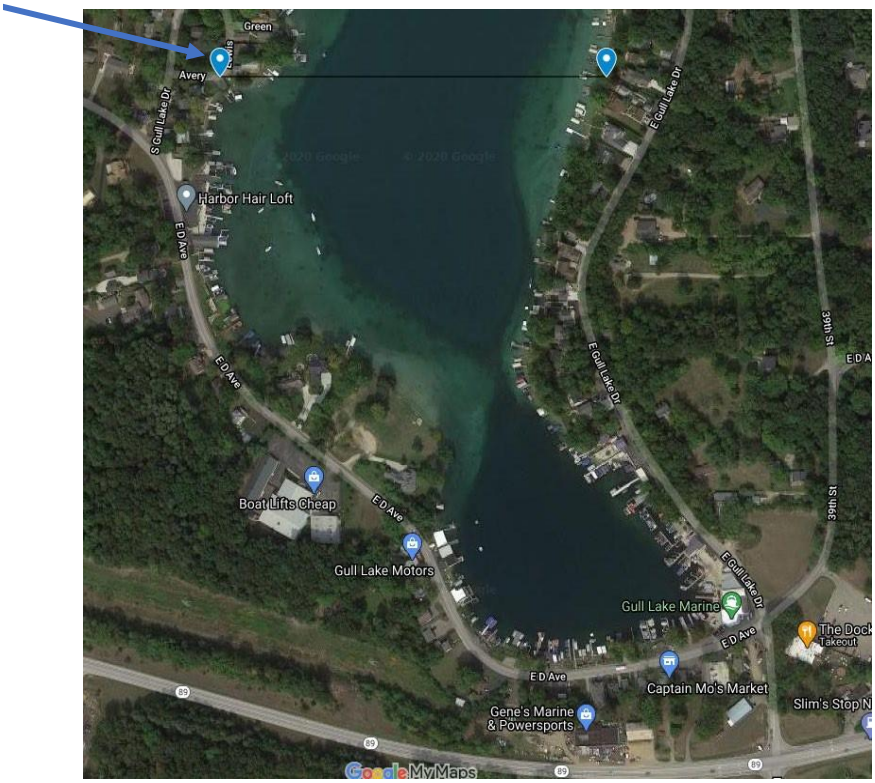
Update Slow/No Wake Zone in the Bay Area of Gull Lake

By Joe Lukeman, Boater Safety Chair

On January 16th, following a request by the Ross Township Board of Trustees, an investigation period which included a field analysis and a public hearing, the DNR communicated their findings for watercraft controls in the bay of Gull Lake. The DNR has recommended the implementation of a slow, no wake speed area in the bay of Gull Lake.

The proposed ordinance reads, "Slow-no wake speed means a very slow speed whereby the wake or wash created by the vessel would be minimal".

This zone would begin just north of Franklin Beach Marina at Avery Street on the west side of the lake and move directly across to the east side of the bay with markers (buoys). These buoys would clearly indicate the boundary. There would also be signage made available at public launch areas notifying boaters of the new controls.



These proposed watercraft control guidelines will be included for discussion and approval during the township's meeting on February 16 at 6pm. The GLQO board is in favor of the proposal and we encourage our members to attend or make their public comments during the upcoming Ross Township meeting.

Update on the Gull Lake Dam Project

By Jeff Price, GLDA

The project to replace the dam at Gull Lake has been steadily progressing this winter. We are nearing the end of the dam spillway part of construction, with the last of the concrete pouring to be finished by the first week in February. What remains for the winter part of the construction schedule is backfilling the new concrete and placing rip rap which should take about ten days. The dam spillway should be opened shortly thereafter.

In the Spring, beginning in early April, Riverworks, Inc. will return to the site and complete the following tasks: installation of the Pile Cap, Catwalk, Legacy Wall, Security Fencing and Gates. The last steps for project completion will be Final Grading, Restoration and Demobilization (removal of all construction equipment). This will take us to early May and the end of the project!

As of January 21, 2021, the project is approximately two weeks behind schedule. This is mainly due to the discovery of a 3-foot diameter pipe located under the dam which ran from the upstream side of the dam and terminated in Gull Creek. It was originally thought to be part of the dam control mechanism which could be used to facilitate dam maintenance. This pipe was discovered during the demolition of the old dam. A few weeks were required to decide how best to address and fix this issue. To fix this problem, specialized equipment was used to drill a hole into the top of the pipe and then fill the pipe with a concrete slurry. This eliminated the possibility of a collapse of this abandoned pipe which could undermine the new dam.

Throughout the construction project, the water level of the lake has been controlled by two siphon tubes located at the dam site (bright aqua blue if you have driven by the site). As we approach Spring, the flow through these tubes is being reduced (14% of flow capacity) to approximate the return to our normal summer lake level. As always, this is a very gradual process that is somewhat dependent on snow and rainfall.

GLQO gratefully acknowledges the leadership of the Gull Lake Dam Association:

Gull Lake Dam Association Board: President – Bill English, Vice President – Jeff Price, Treasurer – Michael Brundage and Secretary – Char Longman

Gull Lake Dam Association Dam Construction Committee: Michael Brundage, Sue Harrison, Ryan Johnson, Rick King, Betty Miller, Jeff Price, Jim Rawsky, Rollin Richman, Bill Sikkema and Doug Smith

It's not too early to start planning to install lake scaping on your shoreline!

By Kay Gross

Homeowners on Gull Lake can take advantage of the low lake levels that will continue this spring due to construction of the new dam and create a natural and sustainable 'lakescape' along their shoreline. Lake scaping creates a natural "buffer zone" between the aquatic and terrestrial areas of a lake home that helps reduce run-off into the lake, can create habitat for wildlife, and provide a colorful and attractive aspect to a lake home. Natural shorelines can also reduce the attractiveness of your yard to Canada Geese!

The internet is a great resource for ideas and pictures for lake scaping, but it takes planning! So now is the time to get started, as spring is just around the corner and getting your ideas developed and (if needed) the appropriate permits approved takes time. MSU Extension worked with the Gull Lake Quality Organization and other local conservation organizations to create four demonstration lake scapes at the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station. You can do a walking tour of these demonstrations anytime, but be sure to visit in the spring/summer when the plants are in full flower!

Mike and Kathy Gallagher (active GLQO members) were among the early adopters of lake scaping and worked with Jane Herbert (now retired) from MSU Extension to develop the lake scaping plan and installation at their Gull Lake Home. You can read about their experience in two articles Mike wrote with Jane in 2015 (listed below).

So, start exploring ideas and mapping out your plan to install a lakescape at your home! It's almost as much fun as watching ice skaters, ice boaters, and people fishing on the lake this winter!

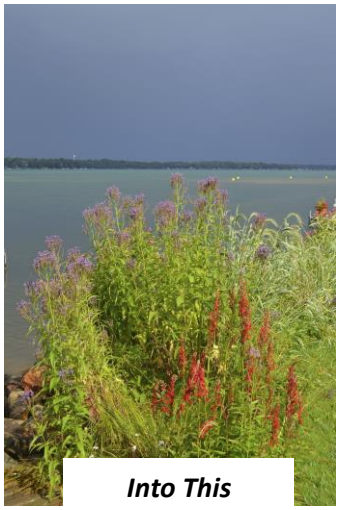
MSU Extension resources on lake scaping (there are lots more!):

- Planning your lake scaping project: https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/smart-lake-gardening-planning-your-nearshore-garden
- Water front plants to enhance your shoreline: https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/smart-waterfront-plants-to-enhance-your-shoreline
- Managing stormwater flow from your yard to the lake: https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/smart-stormwater-solutions-for-protecting-your-waterfront

MSU Extension articles on installation of native shoreline (Jane Herbert and Mike Gallagher 2015)

- https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/a_native_michigan_shoreline_we_did_it_so_can_you_part_one
- https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/a_native_michigan_shoreline_we_did_it_so_can_you_part_2

Transform This



Into This

Our World of Birds and What to Plant

By Martha Koestner Gesmundo

While many Gull Lake area residents have been faithfully feeding suet and seed to our non-migratory bird populations during the long months of winter it is worthwhile to remember that before long our birds will be abandoning our generous feeders and begin foraging elsewhere for sustenance to feed themselves and their new families. The foods they must seek will come from sources that support many, many caterpillars. Why do most birds feed their young almost exclusively on caterpillars? Because caterpillars are soft, their exoskeleton thin and flexible, and therefore easy for parent birds to plunge down the tender throats of their hungry young. Caterpillars have more carotenoids than any other insect. Carotenoids contribute to feather coloring which is pivotal for successful courtship. Caterpillars are a soft bag containing more protein per pound than beef. Caterpillars are superfoods that ensure baby birds will grow fast so they can fledge their birth nest as soon as possible. Other than the extreme dangers involved with migration, growing up in their nests is the most vulnerable and perilous time of their short lives. The sooner they fledge, the better.

Monarch Caterpillar Stages

Monarch Butterfly

I used to think that where butterflies and moths deposit their eggs was merely a matter of happenstance. Not so, according to Doug Tallamy, head of the Entomology department at the University of Delaware. His research reports that 95% of all native insects are specialists; that is, they lay their eggs and grow as caterpillars on *only one specific host plant*. These specialists have coevolved over thousands of years with their host plants and have developed specialized strategies to overcome the barriers that their host plants have created to protect themselves. Consider the monarch butterfly, which as many of us know, deposits its eggs exclusively onto milkweed plants. Since 1970, this national favorite and its host plant have diminished 96% due to the extensive use of herbicides. The eradication of the prodigious milkweed from the Midwest Breadbasket is understandable. Our farmers need to farm successfully. Nevertheless, also extending the range of herbicides to adjacent roadsides and to our own gardens threatens our beloved monarchs.

Milkweed Plant

Our World of Birds and What to Plant

Continued From Page 7

Since chickadees prefer to feed their babies caterpillars, they settle in areas that offer rich supplies of them. How do they find out where the caterpillars are? They go shopping to an oak, a tree that can support over 452 caterpillars, or to a cherry tree which is a host plant for the caterpillars of 418 species of butterflies and moths. They will also check out Bradford pears or Gingkos; trees hosting but one or two species of caterpillars. For nearly two weeks chickadee parents work from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. feeding their young every three minutes. That can add up to an astounding 390-570 trips per day ideally within a 164-foot radius. They cannot go five miles down the road for food. Few if any of their offspring would fledge if they did. Naturally, chickadees and all birds will site their nests in and near trees that conveniently supply the baby food they seek.

Black-capped Chickadee

If you wish to know which trees, bushes, and plants provide the most food for our birds breeding around Gull Lake, there is a search tool developed by the National Wildlife Federation, the Native Plant Finder http://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder. This site ranks plants in the order of the number of insects they support for every US County.

References:

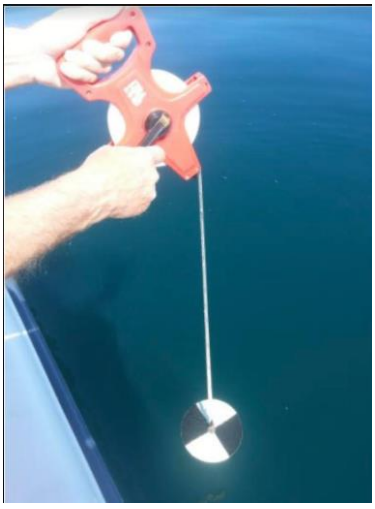
Tallamy, D. W. (2016). Bringing nature home: How you can sustain wildlife with native plants. Portland, OR: Timber Press.

Tallamy, D. W. (2020). Nature's best hope: A new approach to conservation that starts in your yard. Portland, OR: Timber Press.

Water Quality Update

By Dustin Perrin, Water Quality Chair

The Gull Lake Quality Organization is grateful that Mike Gallagher and John Etzcorn have volunteered their time monitoring both Gull Lake and Little Long Lake over the years. Every year, Mike and John gather several different data collections. This is a critical component towards ensuring that the elements that make up these great resources are maintained, thus ensuring the beauty of the lakes we all enjoy. One of the many data collections performed throughout the year is the Secchi Disk (pictured to the right), which tests water clarity. The Secchi disk itself is lowered into the water until the maximum depth of being able to see the disk is established. This measurement is then recorded. This test is taken at the deepest part of the lake where water clarity is best while also limiting variations in reporting.

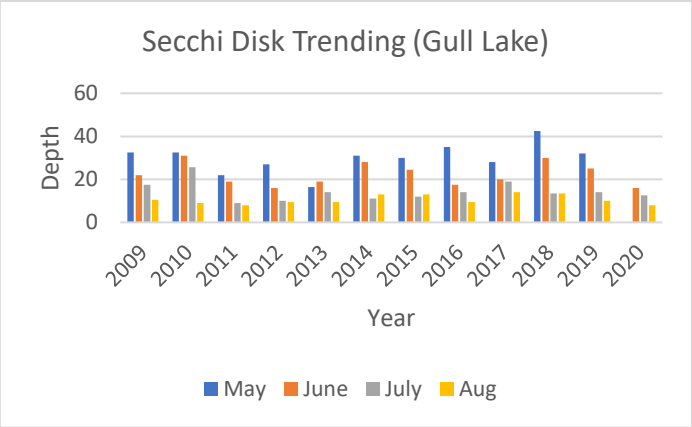


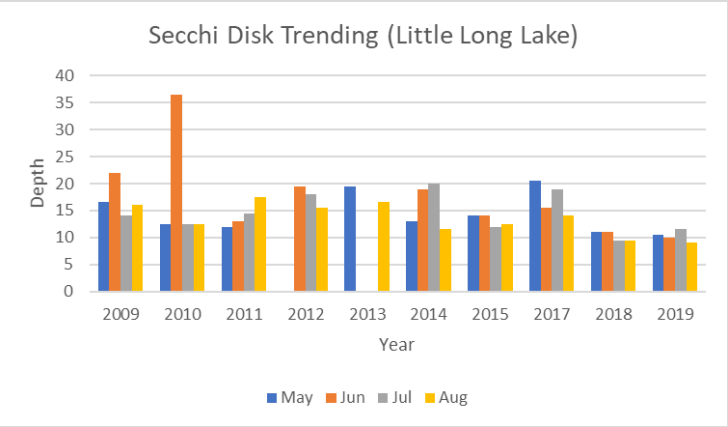
On the next page is a graphic display of the Secchi disk information. This data is displayed with a trending view by month, year over year. Starting

Water Quality Update

Continued From Page 8

Gull Lake, it is evident the best water clarity occurs in May. You can see in May of 2018 we saw depths over 42 feet. Water clarity tends to reduce into July and August. In 2020 you can also see water clarity was down for June, July and Aug as compared to previous years. Little Long Lake trending (below) appears to be more consistent from months May through August as compared to Gull Lake. June 2010 stands out as our best water clarity at over 36 feet. Years 2018 and 2019 appear to have less water clarity compared to previous





If you missed our membership mailing in January, please use this form to join GLQO!!!

2021 Gull Lake Quality Organization Membership Form

PO Box 144, Richland, MI 49083

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Additional E-Mail: _____

- ☐ **Membership Dues for 2021*:**
  _____ Minimum of $40 _____ ($75) _____ ($100) _____ ($250) _____ ($500)
- ☐ **Yes! I wish to become a lifetime member of GLQO:** _____ ($1,500)
- ☐ **I wish to receive the Riparian Magazine for $14: _____**
  (A $25 value for only $14 for GLQO members!)

Total Enclosed: $_____

- ☐ I wish to receive the GLQO Newsletter electronically to the email(s) noted above.
- ☐ I do not wish to have my name published in the quarterly GLQO Newsletter.
- ☐ If this is a Business/Corporate Membership, please include proprietor's name. Both are considered members. _____

* All membership levels are regarded as confidential.

Thank you to the 2021 Individual and Family Members

Memberships Received As Of February 1, 2021

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Scott and Holly Allen
Lou Ann Ambro
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Shepherd Family, LLC

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Stephen and Linda Winquist
Gerald and Kathleen Wojtala
Dan Wood Company
Doug and Jackie Wunderly
Ron and Sonya Young

Water Quality Chair, Dustin Perrin's dog, Clyde checking out water clarity on thin ice!!! You can see the lake bottom!

Thank you to the 2021 GLQO Corporate Members

Bell Tower Lake House Living Co
Gull Lake Country Club
Gull Lake Ministries
Hawks Hollow Builders
Michigan Lawn Services, Inc.

Thank you to our newsletter sponsor!

The Gull Lake Quality Organization

P.O. Box 144 / Richland, Michigan / 49083
Website: glqo.net

Upcoming Events

GLQO Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 9 at 7:00 PM
Virtual

GLQO Board Meeting
Tuesday, May 11 at 7:00 PM
Virtual

If there are ideas or issues that you think GLQO should address please contact any of the board members or communicate through our Facebook page or website.

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Kay Gross (23-1)
Vice President
Gary Mittelbach (23-2)
Secretary
Joe Mauro (22-1)
Treasurer

John Etzcorn (22-2)
Rick Hebert (23-1)
Joe Lukeman (23-2)
Steve Keith (23-2)
Dustin Perrin (22-1)
Martin Ranly (23-1)
Margo Rebar (22-1)
Linda Shierlaw (22-2)
Doug Smith (22-1)
Brook Wilke (23-2)

*GLQO by-laws allow volunteers to serve as directors for two consecutive three-year terms. After each Director's name are two numbers: the **year** their current term expires, and the **number** of the current term.*

We welcome you to volunteer for committee work (of your choice) and to participate in our board meetings.

The Gull Lake Watershed includes Gull Lake, Little Long Lake, Grassy Lake, Little Gull Lake, Miller Lake, Bullhead Lake, Duck Lake, Backus Lake, Dake Lake, Elliston Lake, Mud Lake, Wintergreen Lake, and Prairieville Creek.