

# 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.*



## Fall Fling 2022 – Thank You All!

*Rick Hebert & Sera Gesmundo, Co-Chairs, Outreach Committee*

This year's Gull Lake Quality Organization Fall Fling meeting event was held at the Gull Lake Country Club on Sunday, September 25th.

At this year's event, we were fortunate to hear from Julia Kirkwood (EGLE), who informed us about the impact of lakescaping and using native plants as natural buffers between lawns and shorelines to impact our water quality in a positive way. Many of those in attendance expressed an interest in learning more about lakescaping at the conclusion of the event. Kay Gross, president of the GLQO, addressed the importance of using the boat wash at the Prairieville public launch to limit the introduction of invasive species into Gull Lake, as well we opportunities facing the GLQO in the future.

Attendees were treated to several door prize drawings that included gift certificates from local merchants including Gull Lake Country Club, Urban Nest, Serafino's, Kitchen House, South Kitchen, Gull Lake View, and Noteworthy. Gull Lake Marine, Gull Lake Ministries, Hawks Hollow Builders and Premier Builders & Remodelers were kind enough to donate money to support our event. Bell Tower donated a beautiful Adirondack chair and table that were won by member Greg Smith.

Turnout for the event was wonderful and well over 100 attendees enjoyed good food and drink together!

The GLQO would like to thank those who purchased tickets to our 2022 Fall Fling. We look forward to sharing more information with community members about the role GLQO plays in safeguarding our lake at the Fall Fling in 2023.

*Note: Keep up to date with the Gull Lake Quality Organization by visiting us at [www.glqo.net](http://www.glqo.net) or by joining our Facebook Group.*



## Fall 2022

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*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.*

## Please! Don't Dump Your Leaves Into the Lake or Creek!!

*Gary Mittelbach*

Every year we get reports from fellow riparians and GLQO members saying that their neighbor or someone they know is blowing their leaves and/or lawn clippings into the lake and what can they do about it. The answer is, please tell them that what they are doing, while not illegal, is certainly bad for the lake. Leaves and lawn clippings contain nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous that promote the growth of algae. Also, as the leaves decay over time, their decomposition consumes oxygen. Both are harmful to the lake in large amounts. The few leaves that naturally land in the lake



aren't a problem; a small amount of nutrient input is actually good for the lake. But, dumping lots of leaves into the lake can have serious, negative effects on water quality. Likewise, **do not burn your leaves near the lake**. Burning releases nutrients on the ground and if this occurs too close to the water, these nutrients will find their way into the lake. If you do burn leaves (and there are better options, see below), please make sure your bonfire is well away from the shoreline.

The best thing to do with your leaves of course is to compost them – that way the nutrients and organic matter go back into your yard or garden. Mulching mowers are also a good option for moderate amounts of leaves and if you have property off the lake, putting your leaves there to decay is a great option. But, if you have a small lakeside lot and a lot of leaves, composting and mulching may not handle the load. In that case, hiring a lawn service to haul them away may be your best or only option. Yes, that can be costly. But you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that by keeping leaves and their nutrients out of the lake, you have been a good steward to the environment and a friend to the lake.

## Safe Boating on Gull Lake Enhanced by Activities of the Ross Township Police Department and the Kalamazoo County Sheriff Marine Patrol

*Joe Lukeman, Chairperson, Boating Safety & Law Enforcement Committee*

As the summer 2022 boating season comes to a close, we are pleased to provide a summary of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Marine Patrol activities on Gull Lake in 2022 and also to update you on an important new development by Ross Township.

Christina Hutchings, Ross township Supervisor, reports that **Ross Township** has recently reactivated its police department. Christina notes that Ross Township has hired a police chief, Melody Rugg, a 22-year veteran of Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department and K9 Officer. In addition, through generous resident donations to Ross Township, the Township was able to purchase a police boat to once again patrol Gull Lake, as it did previously when the Township had its own police department (see photo on right).



Ross Township's patrol activities on Gull Lake will be in cooperation with the Sheriff's department when their schedule and staffing permits. In addition, the DNR has hired a new Conservation Officer in Ross Township, Jim Nason. This summer, Officer Nason patrolled with Police Chief Mel in the Ross Township Police Department patrol boat during Mardi Gras day (see photo below).



Christina notes that Police Chief Mel can be reached by calling the Ross Township office at 269-731-4888 – **FOR NON-EMERGENCIES**. For emergency calls, please call 911 and the first available law enforcement professional will respond, as necessary. The police cruiser and Chief Mel will be out on the roads beginning November, 2022. You can contact Christina via phone (269-731-4888), Fax (269-731-5551) or email at [Supervisor@rosstownshipmi.gov](mailto:Supervisor@rosstownshipmi.gov).

Jeff Christensen from the **Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office** reported the following activities by the Sheriff Marine Patrol on Gull Lake during summer 2022. Personnel hours spent on Gull Lake totaled 308, with 441 boater contacts made. Warnings were issued for the following activities: operations (228), navigation (10), wear PFD (17), registration (40), DP or No Wake warning (25). One arrest was made for OUI and one citation issued for operation. The GLQO is pleased to help support the activities of the Sheriff's Marine Patrol on Gull Lake.

## Gull Lake Fisheries Highlighted at GLQO Annual Meeting

*By Brook Wilke, Chairperson, Fisheries Committee*

Matt Diana, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Fisheries Biologist, provided a keynote presentation on Gull Lake Fisheries at the GLQO Annual Meeting held on August 9, 2022. Despite some technical difficulties that limited presentation materials, Matt provided attendees with an excellent update of the status of several game fish species important to Gull Lake anglers, which inspired further conversation based on the interests of the audience.

Diana, who covers fisheries for MDNR in all or portions of 14 counties in SW Michigan, reported on Gull Lake northern pike surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019. Most fish caught by anglers were between 20-25" long with relatively few larger fish. A small portion of fin was collected from these fish to determine their age (similar to the rings on a tree), in order to determine the growth rates of pike in the lake. Results indicated that young (1-4 years old) fish were the same length as statewide averages, but older fish (5+ years) were smaller than statewide average (Figure 1). Potential causes of this plateaued growth were discussed at the meeting, but the exact cause is unknown. Discussions are occurring about the possibility of restricting harvest of 24-34" pike in Gull Lake (a.k.a. slot limit) to inspire a higher proportion of larger pike. Anglers will be invited to provide feedback on this idea before decisions about such changes would be finalized.

Bass tournaments on Gull Lake were also discussed at the meeting, as Gull Lake continues to rank in the top two lakes in Michigan for the number of bass tournaments per year. In 2022, 60 bass tournaments were registered by MDNR, which was similar to 2021 (Figure 2). Most of these tournaments occur between June and August, and average 18 boats per tournament. Bass tournament anglers typically catch and live release between 2,000 – 2,500 fish per year. Diana reported on research studies indicating that tournament fishing

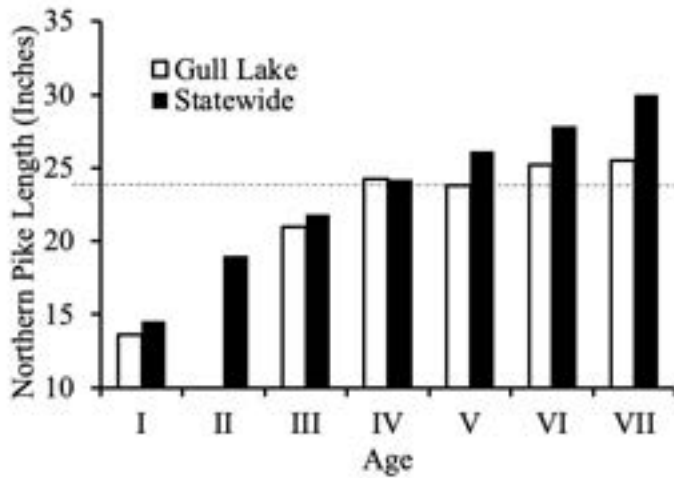


Figure 1. Length and age of northern pike surveyed by Gull Lake anglers in 2018 and 2019. Results indicate shorter than average pike in Gull Lake once they reach 5+ years old.

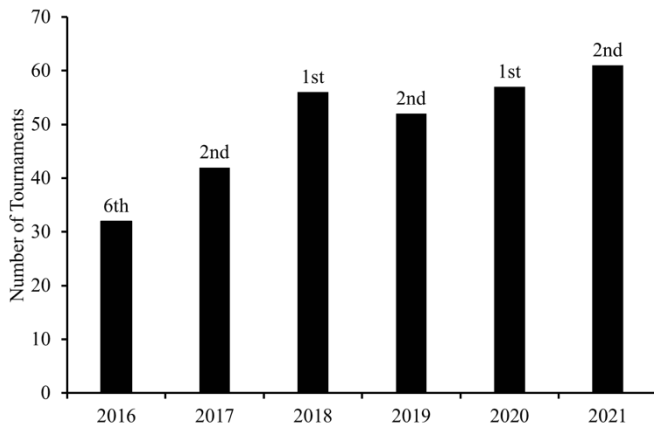


Figure 2. Number of registered bass tournaments launching from Gull Lake's Prairieville Township Park from 2016 to 2021. Sixty tournaments were registered in 2022.



Figure 3. An abundant catch of smelt through the ice

does not negatively influence fish populations, and that fish are able to navigate back to their home ranges after being caught and transported for weigh-ins at launches. Anglers are penalized heavily for fish that don't survive and utilize lakes for repeat events over time, so are heavily invested in maintaining the quality of bass populations in Gull Lake and others that are used for tournaments.

The smelt population in Gull Lake has made an incredible recovery following a fish kill in 2016. Smelt are typically harvested during winter through the ice, and 2022 was a fruitful season for anglers due to the smelt population and solid ice conditions (Figure 3). Historically, smelt in Gull Lake spawn in winter or early spring in Prairieville Creek, which enters Gull Lake at the Prairieville Township Park. However, MDNR surveys of the creek have resulted in fewer smelt than expected in recent years, which has them wondering if Gull Lake smelt are reproducing elsewhere in the lake or watershed.

The MDNR continues to be interested in stocking lake trout in Gull Lake, which is only possible due to the unique characteristic of oxygenated water in deeper areas that stay cool year-round. While lake trout have not been stocked in the past few years, future stockings are expected depending on the availability of larger lake trout from area fish hatcheries.

A copy of Diana's presentation from the Annual Meeting is available on the GLQO fisheries website (<https://glqo.net/portfolio-item/fisheries/>). Also available on the website is a Gull Lake MDNR Fisheries report published in April of 2020.

**2023 Memberships**  
*Kay Gross, President*

It's that time again... leaves are turning, boats and docks are coming in off the lake, and it's time to renew (or join) your membership for 2023 in the Gull Lake Quality Organization! It's easy... just go to [www.glqo.net/join](http://www.glqo.net/join) and complete the membership form and mail with your dues to GLQO, Box 144, Richland MI 49083. You can also

join/renew and pay dues online using your favorite form of online payment.

GLQO is a volunteer organization and committed to maintaining high water quality in Gull Lake and the surrounding watershed. This year we spent over \$7000 to monitor, map and treat areas of Gull Lake for invasive aquatic plants – effective control requires sustained and continuing efforts. GLQO also operates and maintains the boat wash at the Prairieville Township Park on Gull Lake, an important component of our efforts to keep invasive species out of Gull Lake. This year we operated the boat wash every weekend and on major holidays from May through September. We also offered fun and educational ‘while you wait activities’ to increase public understanding of the organisms that are important components of the lake and watershed (see photo below).

We hope you will continue to support the GLQO through your membership – and invite you to consider increasing the level of your membership this year. Also, a GLQO membership is a great gift for neighbors and/or new homeowners on Gull or Little Long Lake. Memberships received by **1 February** are eligible to receive *The Michigan Riparian* at a discounted rate of \$14.



[www.glqo.net/portfolio-item/gallery](http://www.glqo.net/portfolio-item/gallery)

## 2022 Corporate Members

† denotes Lifetime Member

**Bell Tower Lake House Living Co.**

**Boudeman Farms, LLC**

**Dan Wood Company**

**Mac's Garage, LLC**

**Gull Lake Country Club**

**Gull Lake Ministries**

**Hawks Hollow Builders†**

**Michigan Lawn Services, Inc.**

**Serafino's**

**Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy**

## 2022 Individual/Family Members

† denotes Lifetime Member

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Susan B. Anthony	Gordon and Sally Birdsall
Charlotte Ashton	Jeffrey Bither
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## The Gull Lake Quality Organization

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P.O. Box 144 / Richland, Michigan / 49083

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

Contact: [info@glqo.net](mailto:info@glqo.net)



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### Upcoming Events

#### **Upcoming Board Meetings**

Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM

Carriage House Classroom  
W.K. Kellogg Biological Station  
3700 East Gull Lake Drive  
Hickory Corners, MI

*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.*

### 2022-2023 Board of Directors

Kay Gross (23-1) **President**  
Sera Gesmundo (25-2) **Vice President**  
Gary Mittelbach (23-2) **Secretary**  
Don Paulson (25-2) **Treasurer**

Tom Belco (25-1)  
Randy Curtenius (25-1)  
Peter Hawk (25-1)  
Rick Hebert (23-1)  
Steve Keith (25-2)  
Joe Lukeman (23-2)  
Dustin Perrin (25-2)  
Margo Rebar (25-2)  
Doug Smith (22-1)  
Jay Wesly (25-1)  
Andy Widner (25-1)  
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.*

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**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.**