



Bills Lake Improvement Association

Environment Committee Newsletter

July 2021

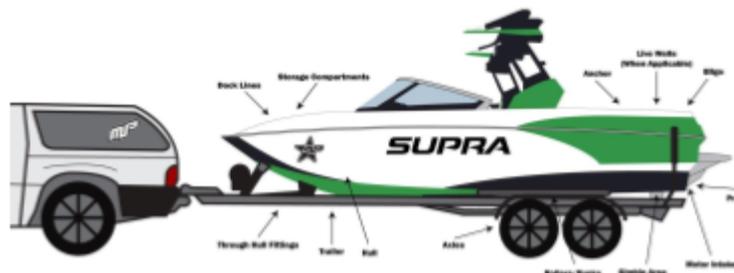
Caryn Kersey | Martha Gabrielse | Roger Poel | Scott Byrne

This newsletter is coming to you from the Environment Committee of Bills Lake Association. The Committee was formed in response to overwhelming interest in protecting the pristine beauty of Bills Lake. We intend to provide timely information and links to key resources related to protecting and preserving our local environment. We hope you enjoy this inaugural edition and welcome requests and suggestions for content to include in future editions.

Boat Washing is State Law

Aquatic invasive species are most often introduced and spread through recreational boating and angler activities and can have long lasting negative impacts such as reduced native species diversity, waterways choked with weeds and reduced opportunities for fishing and swimming. Boaters can help prevent the spread of invasive species with a few simple steps before launching. ***Violation of the law is a state civil infraction. Violators may be subject to fines. Please inform all guests and renters of the law. Additionally, ensure any hired dock services are adhering to the law.***

CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY



Michigan State University's Mobile Boat Wash

We are pleased to announce that the **Mobile Boat Wash** will be **visiting Bills Lake on Friday, August 6th, 9AM - 2PM**. All are welcome. This free program is provided by Michigan State University.

The Mobile Boat Wash unit is an outreach program from Michigan State University designed to educate boaters about aquatic invasive species. Boaters will also learn about proper boat washing which includes:

INSPECT boats, trailers and equipment. Remove all mud, debris and aquatic plant material. Hose or powerwash and dry thoroughly.

DRAIN live wells, bilges and all water from boats before leaving the access site. Disinfect live wells and bilges with beach solution (1/2 cup bleach to 5 gallons of water). Fish disease and microscopic invasive species can be hiding in seemingly clean water.

DISPOSE of unused bait in the trash. Do not release bait into the water. This can lead to unintended introduction of aquatic invasive species.

DO NOT TRANSFER FISH to other bodies of water.



Michigan Lake and Stream 60th Annual Conference

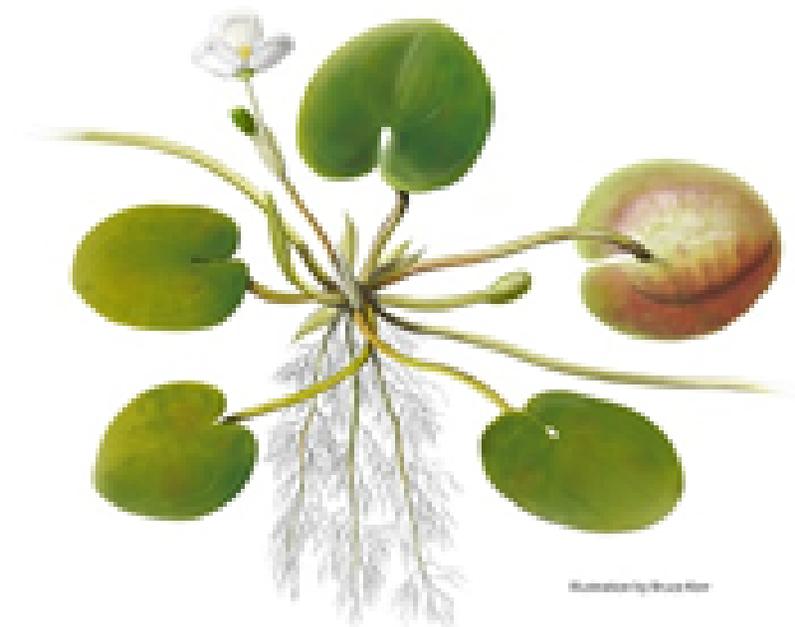
Members of the committee participated in the event on April 30, 2021. Content and recorded sessions found at: [MLSA60 Virtual Conference | Michigan Lakes & Streams Association, INC \(mymlsa.org\)](https://www.mylsa.org/virtual-conference) Topics include: Phosphorus Mitigation, Michigan Environmental Council, Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program CLMP/MiCorps, Special Assessment Districts, Riparian Rights, and Invasive Species.

Invasive Species Highlight: European Frog-bit

Although not recorded as being an issue for Bills Lake, due to broad concern (6,211 reports from the 12 states in the MISIN - as of May 24, 2021) we are providing some high-level facts about European frog-bit. In West Michigan, the plant has been found in inland lakes in Kent County as well as the Lower Grand River in Ottawa County and Pentwater Lake in Oceana County. Detailed information: [Invasive Species - European Frogbit \(michigan.gov\)](http://michigan.gov)

HABITAT: European frog-bit is most often found in slow moving rivers, sheltered inlets, ponds, bayous and ditches. Prefers water rich in calcium with no wave action.

APPEARANCE: European frog-bit resembles miniature water lilies. Free-floating aquatic plant sometimes rooted in shallow water. Leaves are small, 0.5-2.5 inches, round to heart-shaped, with a purple-red underside. Leaves form a rosette. Single flower with three white petals and yellow center may be visible from June to August.



Report possible sightings to the committee.

Chemical Treatment for Invasive Species

Bills Lake is very fortunate to be one of the few lakes in Newaygo County (or even in the state of Michigan) NOT currently using chemicals or herbicides for invasive species treatment. With your help, it is our goal as a committee to keep it that way. Both the DNR and EGLE are also very committed to helping us protect our lake. We are working with EGLE's Invasive Species specialist to monitor our water and correctly identify any invasives we are unaware of. Please join us in the fight to keep aquatic invasive species out of Bills Lake and reduce the potential of chemical treatments.

Some facts regarding treatment:

Chemicals that are applied directly to lakes can seriously harm the ecosystem.

Treatment costs generally fall on property owners.

Depending on the type of treatment, no swimming for up to two weeks.

Instead of using chemicals, some associations opt to dredge their lake bottom. This requires a dredging boat and volunteers.

Based on lake association websites, a few neighboring lakes who chemically treat are:

Brooks	Emerald
Pickerel	Hess
Fremont	Kimball
Ryerson	Sylvan
Hardy Pond	

A few popular Michigan lakes treating are:

Big White Fish	Green Lake
Canadian Lakes	Diamond Lake
Houghton Lake	Crooked Lake

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Please ensure that you and your guests follow the Special Local Watercraft Controls WC-62-91-001 for Bills Lake. ***Between the hours of 7:30pm and 11am (EDT) it is unlawful to “(a) Operate a vessel at high speed AND (b) have in tow, or otherwise assist in the propulsion of, a person on water skis, a water sled, kit, surfboard, or other similar contrivance.”***

FUN FACT:

We've been monitoring the lake's transparency via Secchi Disk tests since mid-May. We have recorded visibility to depths ranging from 18' to 23.5', most recently 20' on June 28.

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KEY LINKS:

[Michigan Lakes & Streams Association, INC | preserving and protecting the waters of Michigan \(mymlsa.org\)](http://mymlsa.org)

[Home | Institute of Water Research \(msu.edu\)](http://msu.edu)

[Clean Boats Clean Waters \(msu.edu\)](http://msu.edu)

[EGLE - Environment, Great Lakes & Energy \(michigan.gov\)](http://michigan.gov)

[DNR - DNR \(michigan.gov\)](http://michigan.gov)

2021 Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws - [michigan-handbook-entire.pdf \(kalkomey.com\)](http://kalkomey.com)