



Van Etten Lake Association

Fall 2022 Newsletter

Keeping Members Informed and Involved

VELA Members:

It is already November.....Christmas will be here before we know it.

Thanks to all who helped out this year on our VELA Committees and on the VELA Board of Directors. If you would like to be involved in any of our committees, just let us know. You can email us at velalakeassoc@gmail.com.

At our September membership meeting there was a question asked about Walleye stocking in Van Etten Lake. One of our members contacted a friend at the DNR Fisheries Division and we wanted to share this information with all our membership.

Received from DNR Fisheries division about the "shortage" of walleye in Van Etten Lake.

We stopped stocking walleye there a few years back for a number of reasons. First, we were seeing very strong natural production of walleye each time we electrofished the lake during fall juvenile assessments, thus stocking was not considered warranted. Second, it is hard to justify stocking a fish (which is typically consumed) into a lake that has enough red flags on it for consumption. Yes, there is a mercury advisory (because it would be equal to the PFAS advisory) but it is very conservative (an angler is recommended by the Dept. of Health and Human Services to not have more than 1 serving of walleye per month at Van Etten) That is much more conservative than what you see for walleye advisories statewide.

Third, there are so many walleye in that region (lower Au Sable River fish, Van Etten itself, Cedar Lake, and a burgeoning walleye population moving north from Saginaw Bay) that to me having another walleye factory (see reasoning 1 and 2) wasn't necessary. We stock many trout and salmon in the lower Au Sable system and having more walleye fall out from Van Etten Lake into the lower river and preying on our stocked trout and salmon was not very acceptable. Also, having less walleye in Van Etten Lake can only help your panfish populations which may not accumulate toxins as much as the predators do.

NOW, having said all that.... We did stock Van Etten Lake with spring fingerling walleye this past spring accidentally. It basically was a mix-up between our unit and the unit where we attain fish from their ponds south of you. Minor mix-up in communication between our fisheries unit and our sister fisheries unit. This should not happen again. I was talking to a friend just this weekend that fishes all over the Oscoda region and he mentioned that he just saw a very large number of juvenile walleye at night (probably from our stocking this past spring) below the dam at Van Etten. Not uncommon for stocked or wild fish to be swept downstream.

We hope the above helps answer some of the questions received at our September meeting. Our next Membership meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 10, 2023 at 10:00am. We will be meeting at the Robert Parks (Oscoda Twp.) Library.

Richard Copland

President, Board of Directors

MEMBERSHIP Everyone is Invited

Fall Membership Update

Diane Banks is the Membership Committee Chair. According to Oscoda Township records, there are over 640 individual lake property owners. To date, 315 (49%) are currently VELA members.

The 2022 membership dues went out late in the year due to unforeseen circumstances, however the 2023 dues will be mailed/emailed in January. Diane keeps up-to-date master lists of all members and potential members. It's important to keep her informed of changes to email and mailing addresses. Please send changes to vela.dbanks@gmail.com so that you will continue to receive our newsletters and notices. Look for your 2023 Membership renewal forms in the US Mail in January.

Making Waves

by Melissa DeSimone, MLSA Executive Director

The DNR Fisheries Division put out an excellent report in September about wake boats, Fisheries Report 37. The report provides a comprehensive and easy to follow summary of research done on the topic as well as recommendations that would allow the use of wake boats in a safe and responsible way. The link to the report is <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DNR-Wake-Boat-Report.pdf>

VELA INBOX

Have questions about the lake association? Email any board member. You may also visit our website - www.vanettenlake.org

VELA PICNIC

An enjoyable evening was had by approximately forty adults, three kids at this year's picnic. VELA provided potato salad, hamburgers, hotdogs (from Klenow's in East Tawas) ice tea, lemonade. 731 silent auction tickets totaling 391 dollars were sold for a chance to win some nice prizes. One lucky attendee won 112 dollars on the 50/50 raffle. Three kids took home a toy from the kids raffle. After many years of service, the Picnic Committee Chair, Carole Plunkey and the rest of the committee decided to retire this year. Thank you for all the memorable picnics, fun times had by everyone! Volunteers are needed for future picnics.



2022 VAN ETTEN CLMP LAKE WATER QUALITY

Dan Stock, Lead lake Monitor

SECCHI DISK CLARITY

Weekly clarity sampling which started in mid-May was completed on September 8. Average results over the summer were 4.9 feet. This compares to an average of 6.5 feet over the past 10 years. Mid-lake water temperature over the summer was 71.4 degrees F as compared to a 10 year average of 69.6.

PHOSPHOROUS TESTING

The Spring Phosphorus result showed a concentration of 32.0 ppb which compares to a 10 year average of 25.4 ppb. Although the summer P test results have not been received to date, the lingering algae bloom even with the cooler temperatures would seem to indicate the presence of a high late summer P concentration this year.

CHLOROPHYLL A TESTING

Monthly Chlorophyll-A samples were taken from May through September with results expected over the winter.

PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

We plan to sign-up for Spring Phosphorus, Clarity, Chlorophyll A and Summer Phosphorus testing again next year. Additional sampling help is needed. The once per week summer sampling starts in mid-May and runs through mid-September. If interested in helping for a four week turn, call Dan at 989-739-4239.



PRVEL normally meets on the second Thursday of January, April, July and October at 10am at the Alcona Conservation District Office located at 320 S. State St., Harrisville, the next meeting will be on January 12, 2023. Volunteers are always welcome. If interested, please contact us at 989-310-6408 or at russell.williams@macd.org.

The Pine River VanEtten Lake Watershed (PRVEL) depends substantially on financial support from VELA and individuals who wish to support our conservation projects, which ultimately benefit the water quality of VE lake. We will be participating in the Giving Tuesday on November 29 this year, so please consider a donation toward our efforts at that time or mail a donation to: PRVEL, PO Box 680 Oscoda, MI 48750 at any time.



Van Etten Dam Information & Update

Greg Cole-Dam Operator

The lake drawdown will start on November 7 and will be completed by mid-November. The water level will rise in the Spring starting about the first of May. All these dates are subject to existing weather conditions at the time. The notice of the drawn-down was published by Fred Strauer, Iosco County Drain Commissioner in the October 26th Oscoda Press.



RAB (*Wurtsmith Restoration Advisory Board*) Update

Dan Stock, Community RAB Representative

RAB meetings are on the second month of each quarter on the third Wednesday of those months. The next RAB meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 16 November 2022 starting at 5:00 pm. The in-person option will be held at the Oscoda United Methodist Church. Livestreaming will be available for virtual participation. An update will be issued with the livestreaming registration link once it is available.

Clark's Marsh IRA

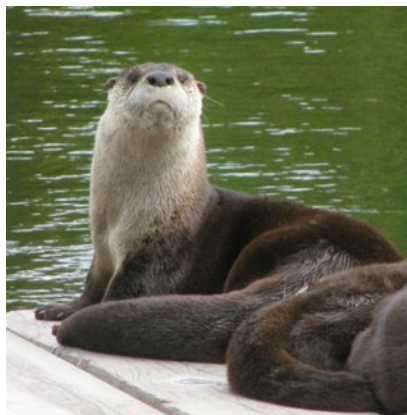
The Air Force reports that after two months of operation, an expanded pump and treat system is already helping to reduce perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOS/PFOA, in groundwater migrating to Clark's Marsh from the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base fire training area. Initial sampling results shows the expanded system is effectively treating the increased flow of PFOS/PFOA impacted groundwater to concentrations below the discharge limits established by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

Van Etten Lake IRA

This project is now scheduled for completion soon.

Other Remedial Investigation (RI) Projects

The Air Force has amended the RI and will investigate the plume activity in the SE corner of the Lake and East of Van Etten Creek extensively next summer.



LAKE WILDLIFE

Two Otters were recently seen playing on the East shore of Van Etten Lake early one morning near Phalen Creek.

Photo: Courtesy of the National Park Service

Weed Committee Report

2022 marked another year without Eurasian Milfoil in the lake. This allowed LakePro and Clarke to focus on the small area of Curly-leaf, nuisance native plants, and algae. For the first survey, LakePro surveyed the littoral zone of the lake and did not find any invasive Eurasian Milfoil. We did find one patch of Curly-leaf. We marked the areas of Curly-leaf, nuisance algae, and native plants for treatment. With approval, Clarke came out and treated 46.2 acres for those plants.

The second survey determined the first treatment to be quite successful. Areas in need of nuisance plant control was reduced and allowed us to recommend the application of SeClear. The second treatment included 18.5 acres of contact herbicides for nuisance plants and SeClear to the entire developed shoreline of the lake, 75.0 acres, which is maximum area we were allowed by the ANC permit. SeClear was specifically selected for use due to another active ingredient in the formulation which binds phosphorus particles in the water. This provides the immediate effect of reducing the available nutrient in the waterbody. The goal for reducing that nutrient was to prevent or delay the cyanobacteria bloom that occurs in the lake annually.

The 2022 lake management was successful. We met the primary goals of monitoring for Eurasian Milfoil, watching for other invasive species, and suppressing nuisance plants. The earlier start this year allowed us to get ahead of any big pondweed blooms. The later SeClear application may have also helped in reducing the cyanobacteria bloom compared to 2021.

The aquatic plant management on Van Etten Lake is progressing efficiently, but is not complete.

Continuing your efforts is vital to keeping the lake in the great condition we saw this summer. We must diligently search for new introductions of invasive species and continuing to manage native plant growth below nuisance levels to continue to make boating, swimming, and fishing better for everyone on the lake.

Thanks for another great summer on your lake,

Tyson Wood

Lake Manager – LakePro, Inc

Tidbits of Lake History

Van Ettan Lake Lodge Will Open On May 30

The new Van Ettan Lake Lodge will open for the season on Decoration Day under new management. Remodeled, refurnished and with a complete change in personnel, the Lodge presents this summer area with a charming and inviting vacation retreat.

Under the personal direction of W. J. Milholin, the Lodge will open to the musical strains of Ange Lorenzo, renowned author of "Sleepy Time Gal," "Sweet Forgot me Not," and other popular song hits. Lorenzo will play Saturday night. Tim Doulittle and his Mountaineers are booked for Sunday night's program.

The Tawas Herald, May 29, 1936



NOW Happenings

Need Our Water (NOW) has continued to increase its effectiveness as an organization with the support of VELA and the community. Below is a summary of the status of their top priorities.

- 1) **Contain the PFAS plume affecting Van Etten Lake.** The USAF has placed a filtration system at this plume which will address the majority of the PFAS flowing into VEL. This system will soon be operational according to the USAF.
- 2) **Provide clean municipal water to all affected residents.** This year the State of Michigan legislation passed (P.A. 053 of 2022) to ensure the Oscoda Area received more than \$8 million dollars for providing safe drinking water to hundreds of homes affected by the PFAS contamination.
- 3) **Provide health monitoring and blood testing to those affected by the contamination at the former WAFB.** Starting October 2022, The Michigan Department of Health and Human services is conducting an Exposure Assessment for all Oscoda and AuSable residents aged 12 and over. This assessment will test the blood and urine of participants for PFAS and other environmental contaminants. Residents will receive a call or mailing to enroll in the project which is expected to last through summer 2023.

NOW efforts continue to address the PFAS contamination at the East Side of VEL. The State is continuing to sample the communities residential and test drinking water wells with detectable PFAS in many areas.

These goals are met through community member activities including monthly strategy meetings with Federal and State legislators and agencies; NOW organizational meetings; Quarterly Restoration Advisory Board activities; MDHHS Community Advisory Team engagement; Michigan PFAS Action Response Quarterly Town Halls; local municipal communication; Non-Governmental Organization support including Michigan League of Conservation Voters, National Wildlife Federation, the Ecology Center and many others.

2022-2023 Board Members

President: Richard Copland	VELABpres@gmail.com
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2023 CALENDAR

- June 03, 2023 VELA General Meeting
- July 08, 2023 VELA Annual Meeting
- Aug 05, 2023 VELA Picnic
- Sept 09, 2023 VELA General Meeting