



Van Etten Lake Association

Fall 2023 Newsletter

Keeping Members Informed and Involved

VELA Members:

As I look out on our beautiful Van Etten Lake, I see many memories in the calm flat glassy water with the sunset reflecting on the lake. The warmth of summer is gone with the crisp cool temperatures of fall wrapping around as we look forward to a beautiful white winter with snow glistening on the evergreens and the sight of ice shanties on a frozen lake. Then the promise of spring and new summer memories to come. We truly are blessed with the splendor of all four seasons here on the lake and the wonderful memories each season brings.



We welcome the new members of our Board of Directors – Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents. Welcome to: John Kraly, Ed Lanivich and Tim O'Harran. As always, the *Van Etten Lake Association* website has a full list of your Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and a myriad of other information of interest to our members. Check it out at (<https://www.vanettenlake.org>).

We wish to thank the continued work of our Committee Chairs and committee members this past year.... *Weed Committee Chair* – Leonard Brockhahn, *Water Quality Committee Chair* - Dan Stock, and *Picnic Committee Chair* – Diane Banks. We also thank Diane for her continued, never-ending work as *Membership Chair*.

All VELA members are asked to thoughtfully consider joining one of our committees for the 2023-24 year. This is not only a great way to keep informed, but also make new friends and renew old acquaintances. Our first Van Etten Lake Association General Meeting for the 2024 year will be on Saturday, June 1 - 10:00am at the Robert J. Parks Oscoda Library. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. We are only as strong and vibrant as our involved membership.

Your Van Etten Lake Association Board of Directors continues to look for ways to educate, inform and actively work toward the improvement of Van Etten Lake and its surrounding environment. To that end, we are putting together a short survey that will be emailed out to all VELA members in the early spring of 2024. We value your input and ask that you take a few minutes to fill out this online survey when you receive it. The results of the survey will be communicated at our General Meeting on June 1, 2024.

Enjoy all 4 seasons here in Oscoda and continue to make new memories!

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 property owners either on the lake or with lake access. To date, 248 (39%) are currently VELA members.

Diane keeps up-to-date master lists of all members and potential members. It is 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 2024 Membership renewal forms in the US mail in January! We also will be accepting online payments – details to follow!

VELA PICNIC



This year's picnic held August 5th at Ratliff Park – Warrior Pavilion, drew over 60 attendees.

A great meal was provided by VELA which included barbecued beef, potato salad, macaroni & cheese (from Rob's Barbecue) iced tea and lemonade. Numerous members brought a dish to pass, along with lots of great desserts.

Those in attendance had a chance to take home some great prizes. Seventeen companies and individuals donated gifts for the silent auction (see list below) along with one lucky winner who won \$180 on the 50-50 raffle.

A special thank you to all of the members who came out to join in the fun and to all of the donators for the gift raffle. Also, a special thank you to this year's Picnic Chair – Diane Banks and her committee/volunteers: Bonnie Banks, Celeste Creger, Carol Cole, Laura Cassidy and Tiffany Higginbotham and Patty O'Harran.

Raffle Donators :

Dan & Diane Banks
Erin Matthews Quilt Store
Hart Tire & Automotive Center
Wellman's Party & Bait
Lakewood Shores Resort
Mango's Mexican Restaurant

Tim & Patty O'Harran
Parkside Dairy Queen
SunnyBunns Marine
Sunrise Kava Cafe
Gilbert's Drug Store
Tait's Bill of Fare

Mancino's Pizza
G's Pizzeria
Lake Theatre
Kathy's Hallmark
VELA



Yum!

VELA INBOX

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

2023 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 9. Average results over the late summer were 5.1 feet. This compares to an average of 6.4 feet over the past 10 years. Mid-lake water temperature over the summer was 72.3 degrees F as compared to a 10 year average of 70.0.

PHOSPHOROUS TESTING

The Spring Phosphorus result showed a concentration of 20.0 ppb which compares to a 10 year average of 24.4 ppb. Although the result of the summer P test taken in September has not been received to date, the extensive and prolonged heavy algae bloom 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.



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 11, 2024. Volunteers are always welcome. If interested, please contact us at 989-310-6408 or at russell.williams@macd.org.

In addition to our continuation of our annual monitoring of the quality of the watershed through macroinvertebrate sampling, tributary temperature recording and phosphorus and coliform sampling, we received a grant from the State of Michigan for the planting of trees on Van Etten Creek to improve fish habitat and stream temperatures (watch for the project sign on Barlow road just south of the Pine River Trail).

The Pine River Van Etten 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 28 again 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

According to Greg Cole (Dam Operator), the Van Etten Dam is in good shape with regular maintenance and clean-up around the dam continuing as scheduled.

As usual, the water level will begin being lowered for the winter the first week of November and be down to its winter level by the end of November. The water level will be raised back up to its normal summer level by the first week of May 2024.

If you have any questions about the dam or its operation, they should be directed to the Iosco County Drain Commissioner, Fred Strauer.

Fred D. Strauer - Drain Commissioner

Jan Peters - Secretary

Ioscodrain2@ioscocoounty.org

420 Lake Street

Tawas City, MI 48763

(989 984-1052)

RAB (*Wurtsmith Restoration Advisory Board*) Update

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, 15 November 2023 starting at 5:00 pm. The in-person option will be held at the Oscoda United Methodist Church. Live streaming will be available for virtual participation. Watch the Oscoda Press for the link to the live streaming option.

AAA IRA

The next of several proposed interim remedial actions (IRAs) is one is for the Alert Aircraft Area (AAA) groundwater plume, intended to reduce the amount of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) reaching Van Etten Lake. The USAF's preferred project alternative is hydraulic control using pump and treat with granular activated carbon (GAC). The IRA will include a line of extraction wells that will intercept the highest PFAS concentrations in groundwater before they reach the lake. The extraction wells will treat approximately 288,000

gallons per day which will then be discharged to infiltration galleries. The treatment capacity of the pump and treat system will be 500 gallons per minute (gpm) with the ability to be expanded to treat an additional 500-gpm treatment train should future expansion be required.

The other remedial techniques being considered both include the same treatment with direct discharge to Van Etten lake or discharge to the storm sewer system.

LAKE WILDLIFE



Weed Committee Report

Leonard Brockhan, Committee Chair

2023 was a difficult year for weed control that we do not want repeated. Small patches of Eurasian Milfoil and Phragmites were found near the Pine River and the YMCA campground. The milfoil was treated and was not found again on a later survey. A mix-up in the permitting process also resulted the late treatment of the nuisance native weeds in the North Bay area of the lake which led to hindered navigation in that area.

Our major problem was blue-green algae. There is a late algae bloom that started in mid-August and persisted through mid-October. It was very thick and persistent in certain locations producing gas and sewage type odors. These conditions did not seem to hinder boating, fishing, skiing or tubing.

Total phosphorous samples taken on the Pine River at the county line and below the dam in August tested higher than normal. Stream flows were normal at the time and the other tributaries to the Pine tested at normal levels so these results are surprising. A lake sample was also taken in September and the results will be available later this fall. A possible source of the elevated phosphorous levels could be the dead Ash trees decaying in the water.

Unfortunately, the state permit system will not allow large scale algae treatment. It can be used to treat small pockets near shore only which provides relief for only a week or two. Large scale algae treatment will never be approved because of the detrimental effect on fish.

Changes planned for the weed control program next year subject to Township concurrence which the committee believes will result in improved weed control Include:

1. Selection of the applicator early enough and with a multi-year contract so that a multi-year (up to 4 years) permit can be obtained, accelerating the process in subsequent years.
2. Treatment of the North Bay and other sensitive areas in May based on prior year survey results to reduce the quantity of weeds produced and reduce muck formation in the North Bay.
3. Lake Pro will complete the first survey in early June so that timely treatment can be scheduled to stay ahead of heavy weed growth.
4. Treatment of areas indentified by the survey as having invasive or excessive weeds and algae as identified a week before the July 4th weekend.
5. Resurvey after the treatment to identify areas needing follow-up treatment

An end of the year report for 2023 is being prepared by Lake Pro, our consultant, for review by the Weed Committee and the Township. It will be placed on the VELA web-site after it is approved.

Tidbits of Lake History

Basket Picnic
AND
AUCTION SALE
Of **Van Etten** Lake Summer Resort Property
AUGUST 15
100 BEAUTIFUL LOTS
FREE A Beautiful Lot Given Away **FREE**
Every Man and Woman at Picnic or Auction Sale Will Have a Chance to get a Lot
In VanEtten Lake Park Subdivision
Located at the head of VanEtten Lake, Iosco County
about Six Miles North of Oscoda on M-10
Fine Bathing, Boating, Fishing, Hunting
This addition is covered with beautiful Pine and Oak trees. All Lake Shore and water privileges reserved for each lot owner
This is an opportunity particularly for residents of Alcona and Iosco counties to buy a lot at Van Etten Lake. The land around Van Etten Lake is fast being picked up by outside parties and if you want to insure for yourself and family Boating, Bathing, Fishing and Hunting close at home, you should attend this sale and buy one of these lots. Over a quarter of a mile of lake shore and water privileges reserved for the exclusive use of the lot owners.
Basket Picnic Aug. 15—Bring your Basket and Bathing Suit. Enjoy pavilion for both men and women. Sale starts at 1:30 P. M. **TERMS, 25 PER CENT DOWN, BALANCE \$10 PER MONTH.**
For Particulars Write to
HENRY K. GUSTIN, Alpena, Mich.
Andy Adams, Litchfield, Mich., Auctioneer

Tawas Herald August 10, 1923



NOW Happenings

The NOW group along with legislators, partners and others have been working to "Stop the Bleeding" of PFAS chemicals off of the former base for years. Most recently, 4 Interim Remedial Actions needed to stop that flow have been identified and we were informed that indeed those actions are likely to take place! Links to related news items are below. In fact

there were in excess of a hundred stories on this because it is such a milestone for us and the groundbreaking policy in the Department of Defense. Thanks to all our group's experts (Tony Spaniola, Bob Delaney, Mark Henry, Dave Winn, Kyle Jones and RAB members) for their endless hours of work on these plans to get to this point. This shows that a small group of dedicated citizens can make a difference and granted it was very slow, this is how government should work. Citizens input on plans for their community with the government responding to that input. And we could not do this without our close partners at the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, National Wildlife Federation and Ecology Center for making connections, hosting meetings and providing guidance. We are grateful for the letters of support from Oscoda Township, Iosco County and Rep. Mike Hoadley and for members of Congress for keeping the pressure on the Department of Defense. *Thank you* to the local community and our friends across the state for advocating for years on end. <https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2023/08/air-force-to-boost-wurtsmith-pfas-cleanup-under-national-directive.html>

Public radio at WCMU also did a good job: <https://radio.wcmu.org/local-regional-news/2023-08-18/pentagon-expands-pfas-clean-up-in-oscoda-reflecting-national-policy-change>

Oscoda Area Exposure Assessment

You can still enroll in the [Oscoda Area Exposure Assessment](#) by calling 844-464-7327. Currently 580 individuals have enrolled. No results have been sent out unfortunately but MDHHS says they will get them out as soon as possible. Remember you will receive \$65 for participating and have information almost no one in the US has available to them....the levels of PFAS in their body.

Loud Drive Residents

The USAF is assessing the East side of Van Etten Lake for contamination in soil and groundwater. This has been something the NOW group has requested for years. The USAF is reaching out to property owners about this work and you may have seen "access agreements" related to this. Some property owners are asking the USAF to review and modify these agreements to be more desirable. These requests are still pending.

2023-2024 Board Members

Pres. Richard Copland	VELABpres@gmail.com
VP Charles Bauer	chabauer@charter.net
Treas. Leonard Brockhahn	Lbrockhahn@gmail.com
Sec. Celeste Creger	cacreger@ameritech.net
Diane Banks	vela.dbanks@gmail.com
John Kraly	jkraly28@gmail.com
Ed Lanivich	thebiged@comcast.net
Tim O'Harran	tpoharran@gmail.com
Helen Shastal	shastalh@coorisd.net



2024 CALENDAR

- June 1, 2024 VELA General Meeting
- July 6, 2024 VELA Annual Meeting
- Aug 3, 2024 VELA Picnic
- Sept 7, 2024 VELA General Meeting