



The Lake Guardian

Summer, 2008



photo credit: Jonathan Friendly

Protecting Our Water's Edge

Story and Photo by Jonathan Friendly

When Harbor House Publishers paved a six-car parking lot next to its offices in Boyne City last year, it included a small drain and catch basin, just enough to keep storm water from running off and eroding the bank of the Boyne River 10 feet below. It was the kind of small step that county planners hope will add up to a big leap forward to control storm runoff that could otherwise pollute our lakes and streams and wash away river and lake banks.

In pursuit of that goal, county officials are currently asking all cities and municipalities to adopt an ordinance requiring any new construction, whether residential or commercial, to deal appropriately with storm water. So far, eight townships have given preliminary approval to the new rule, and Marc Seelye, Charlevoix County Soil Erosion Control Officer, says he thinks that all local governments will okay it this year.

Homeowners around Lake Charlevoix could feel the impact of the rule when they seek permits to build new facilities such as paved driveways. They will have to make sure that the storm waters that would previously have been absorbed directly into the soil are properly channeled and that the new construction does not interfere with runoff from neighbors. Both homeowners and businesses will have to get approval from the county before the municipality can issue the permit for construction.

Until two years ago, it was not clear who should regulate storm water runoff, so some places were paved over in damaging ways. But

A simple storm drain stops storm water runoff from the Harbor House Publishers parking lot from damaging the bank of the Boyne River. Extensive work over the last two years has repaired and beautified the riverbanks.

the State Attorney General's office ruled that municipalities had to take responsibility. Charlevoix County then drafted a proposal that is making the rounds of local governments. The idea is to have them all adopt the same ordinance, same wording, and give the county authority to administer and enforce it.

Seelye is working with Dr. Grenetta Thomassey, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council Policy Director, to deal with the concerns of each township and city. He said that so far no government has raised any serious objection to the plan.

Controlling runoff benefits the lake, protects wildlife and prevents costly future remediation projects. Enforcing uniform practices around the lake during development or modification of existing properties and roads will help prevent flooding, pollution of the lake and shoreline erosion.

LCA members are encouraged to support their township planners as they review and adopt the new ordinance. For more information, you can contact Marc Seelye at seelyem@charlevoixcounty.org, or Grenetta Thomassey at grenetta@watershed-council.org.

Don't Miss These Upcoming Events!

August 7 & 14 - Discover Lake Charlevoix (see insert)
August 15 - Annual Meeting (see back page)



Looking at the Lake Sam Williamson, LCA President



Sam Williamson
sam@lca-mi.org

Dear Friend of Lake Charlevoix,

This should be the third piece of mail you have received from us this summer. If nothing else we certainly are persistent!

As we have explained, this year we have set a goal to grow our membership so we can be an effective voice for our lake. If you have joined or renewed in response to our previous mailings, we thank you. If not, we are asking you one more time. Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your dues, or go to our website and use the form there.

Remember, to do our job, we need to have your email address. We promise not to bury you in junk mail or solicitations, and we won't give your email address to anyone else.

As you can imagine these mailings are expensive but we are going to have a third newsletter yet this year. It will, however, only go to members. I hope that will include you.

Thanks, and I'll see you at the annual meeting.

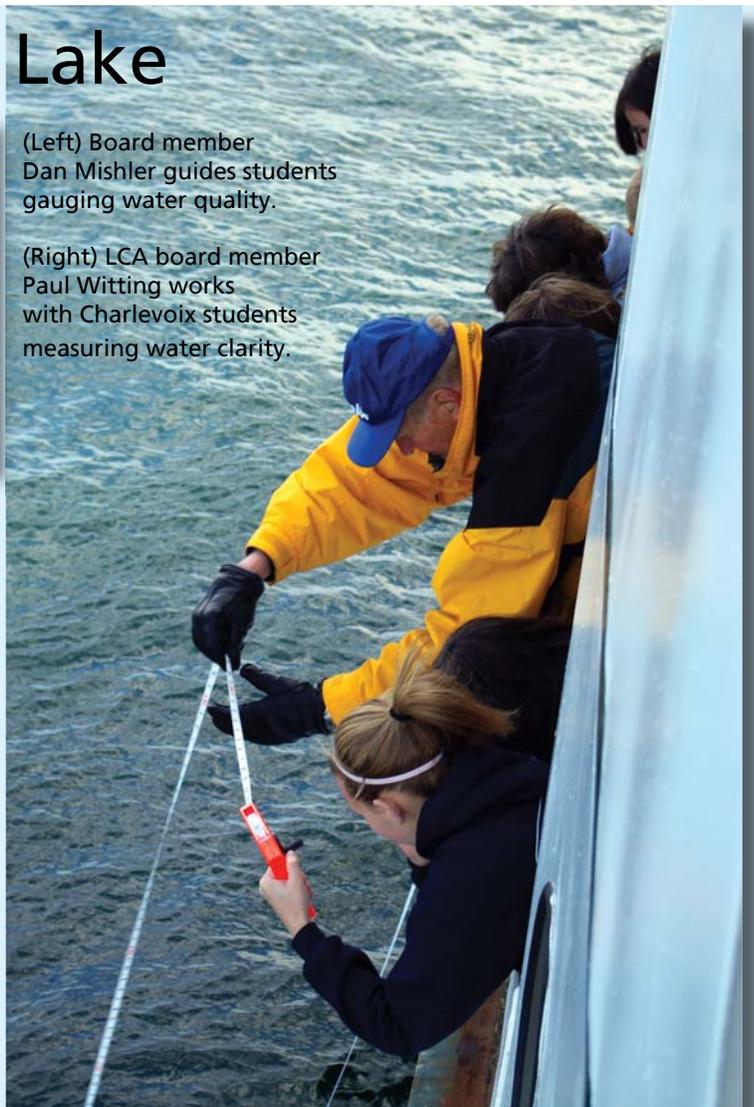
Sam

Students Learn the Lake



(Left) Board member Dan Mishler guides students gauging water quality.

(Right) LCA board member Paul Witting works with Charlevoix students measuring water clarity.



A total of 317 sixth- and seventh-grade science students from Lake Charlevoix schools braved overcast skies and chilly weather May 20 and 21 to get first-hand lessons in measuring water quality, checking lake-bottom aquatic life and practicing water safety. The occasion was the 15th annual Experience Lake Charlevoix outing. Students and teachers from the public schools of Boyne City, Boyne Falls, Charlevoix and East Jordan took part, along with their counterparts from Concord Academy in Boyne City and St. Mary's in Charlevoix. It was the first time that St. Mary's took part.

The trip aboard the Emerald Isle ferry was sponsored by the Lake Charlevoix Association and the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, with board members and staff from both groups serving as instructors. Special thanks are due to the Coast Guard, which detailed two seamen to run the classes in water safety.

The Lake Charlevoix Association is a non profit, 501(c)(3) corporation. All dues are fully tax deductible.

www.lca-mi.org

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Picture this.....

By Paul Witting

.....as a Lake Charlevoix shoreline owner; there you are on your deck, blissfully gazing out onto our beautiful lake. In your mind are many thoughts including how fortunate you are to have this irreplaceable body of water in your front yard. And, you have a certain peace of mind knowing that your property is being ecological friendly to the lake for all to enjoy.

If this last thought is not possible, the part about being environmental friendly to the lake; here are some things to think about.

Landscaping lakefront property differs from typical home landscaping. Generally, when developing a landscaping plan for a residential lot, the home owner selects favorite plants and alters the growing environment to get them to survive. This approach often requires the need to use fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other chemical aids. These fertilizers and chemicals can wash into the lake after a heavy rain and will harm wildlife and degrade water quality.

Using a "lakescaping" approach, the waterfront property owner assesses the growing environment and soil composition, and then selects plants that are known to grow in the existing conditions. Soils can be tested using home kits purchased at local hardware stores or Michigan State University. Information about the MSU service can be obtained at (231) 582 6232 or on their website www.css.msu.edu/SoilTesting.cfm.

A standard soil test will provide information on soil pH, available phosphorus, potassium, calcium and magnesium levels, as well as recommendations for lime and fertilizer. With this information, the lakeside lot owner can give preference to native plants that will thrive in the existing soil and that do not require supplemental water, fertilizers, pesticides or excessive maintenance.

Our website (www.lca-mi.org) provides a list of invasive non-native species to avoid and an inventory of native vegetation that will make your greenbelt a thing of beauty and a real friend for the lake.

Having a lawn on waterfront property is not out of the question IF there is a greenbelt between the grass and water's edge. This buffer of native plants will filter out runoff of chemicals or nutrients from the lawn before they get into the lake. A 30-foot deep greenbelt is recommended, but any depth of natural vegetation is better than none.

Fertilizer packages tell you the percentage of the primary nutrients makeup by weight.

Native Plants



Purple coneflower



Bottlebrush bush



Michigan holly



Canada mayflower



Northern white cedar

The three main components are....

N - Nitrogen (for leaf development and vivid green color)

P - Phosphorus (for root growth)

K - Potassium (sometimes called potash, for root development and disease resistance)

For example, a bag marked "16-4-8" contains 16% nitrogen, 4% phosphorus and 8% potassium. The other 72% is filler material.

Phosphorus in fertilizers is one of the more harmful chemicals to the lake, because it accelerates algae growth. It has been reported that soils in Northern Michigan generally have enough phosphorus for lawn growth, so unless you know for sure that there isn't enough phosphorus in your soil, always use a zero-phosphorus fertilizer.

Additional thoughts for a waterfront friendly lawn.....

- Do not apply fertilizer to your lawn in the spring until 3 weeks after green-up.
- Never let fertilizer land directly in the water.
- Keep fertilizers off any concrete or asphalt surfaces. Rainwater could carry these materials into a drainage system that connects to lake water. Sweep fertilizers back onto lawn.
- Routine clipping removal from the lawn will reduce soil phosphorus levels over time.
- Do not allow clippings to reach the water. This is like throwing fertilizer in the water.
- A light watering after fertilizing will move this material into the thatch and root zone and greatly reduce the possibility of it running into the lake.

Two other practices that will protect lakefront water.

1. Properly dispose of household hazardous wastes. For safe disposal information; keep an eye on local newspapers for announcements on Charlevoix County hazardous waste collection dates. There is a collection day scheduled this year for Saturday, September 6th. You may go to the Charlevoix County recycling website for more information; www.charlevoixcounty.org/recycling.asp#INLINK003.
2. Properly maintain your septic system. An informative bulletin on the maintenance of shoreline septic systems was published by Michigan State University in 1993. You may access this information at; [//web1.msue.msu.edu/imp/modwq/wq130001.html](http://web1.msue.msu.edu/imp/modwq/wq130001.html)

Portions of this article, along with the list of acceptable shoreline vegetation, are based, with permission, on articles previously published by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.



2008 Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting of the Lake Charlevoix Association will be held on August 15th at 10 AM at the Depot in Charlevoix. At that time, we will: Review the accomplishments of the association for the past year.

- Presentation of a treasurer's report
- Vote on proposed by-law changes
- Vote on dues for the next year
- Hold elections of the Board of Directors

After the meeting, there will be a talk by Dave Miles on the history of Lake Charlevoix.



Belvedere Club/Charlevoix Historical Society



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printed on recycled paper
with soy-based inks

It Coulda' Been Lake Charleboyne

Story and photo by Jonathan Friendly

Eighty-eight years ago, in late June of 1926, the state of Michigan had 25 Pine Lakes, which was way too many for the good people who sat on the Charlevoix County Board of Supervisors. So, with the assent of the local boards and chambers of commerce around the lake, they approved a petition to what was then the Department of War's Geographic Board asking that this exceptional body of water get a distinctive name. By the end of October, the federal government acquiesced, and it became, officially, Lake Charlevoix.

The available historic records say that the supervisors had also weighed renaming it Lake Charleboyne, presumably to reflect the importance of the largest city in the county. And the supervisors noted that the lake not only didn't have much pine, it was actually surrounded mostly by oak, maple, beech and other hardwoods. The records are mute on why the word "lake" went from the end of the name to the start of it. (How the county came to be named Charlevoix may never be known, because all the state records about it were destroyed in a fire.) Just for context, it's worth remembering that 1926 marked a severe crash in the U.S. housing market that disrupted the financial markets and led in time to the Great Depression in 1929. It was the year Hirohito became emperor of Japan, Marilyn Monroe was born and Route 66 came into existence. It was also the start of the Book of the Month Club, which managed to ignore *The Sun Also Rises*, a novel our local author Ernest Hemingway published that year. The Club got around to him three years later, selecting *Farewell to Arms* for its list. By then Lake Charlevoix was a reality, and this specific Pine Lake was history.

