

LOW NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 2006

Did you know...?

- No propane tank should be used as an anchor for personal buoy markers.
- The LOW Association was chartered on September 24, 1980. Happy 25th to us!
- Riding on the bow is illegal if the vessel is not equipped with bow seating and the vessel is operating at greater than slow-no-wake speed.
- The herbicides scheduled for LOW use against Eurasian Watermilfoil have no effects on fish or humans.
- Michigan law requires all children under six years of age to wear a Type I or Type II PFD when riding on the open deck of any vessel.

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Membership drive begins for 2006

Happy New Year from the Lake of the Woods Improvement Association!

This newsletter is being mailed to all lake residents within the newly formed Special Assessment District for lake weed control. Thank you for your conceptual and economic support of our weed management project, as endorsed by the Decatur and Hamilton Townships.

All residents are looking forward to improved water quality as treatments begin this year to reduce the infestation of Eurasian Watermilfoil. (See open letter from Professional Lake Management on page 2.)

Even though the cost for

weed control is now shared by all lake residents on the Special Assessment District tax rolls, the need for maximum membership support in the Association still exists. This organization has championed the cause to protect the ecological heritage, the beauty and the recreational value of Lake of the Woods for over 25 years.

Therefore,

...to those of you who have been faithful members,

...to those of you who have let your membership recently lapse, and

...to those of you who have never joined the organization, we invite

you to be part of our unified mission.

Please complete the membership form on page 3 of this newsletter and mail it along with the suggested \$15.00 dues in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Since the new secretary/treasurer is establishing an updated membership database, all renewing as well as new members are asked to complete the form on page 3.

Thank you for supporting the Association. With your involvement our organization will continue to thrive and become stronger, our lakeside neighborhoods will be enhanced, and our lake will enjoy improved

Board of Directors reduces annual dues

The annual dues for the Association were set at **\$15.00** by the Board of Directors at its October 16, 2005 meeting. The new fee is effective with this 2006 membership year. Dues help to sustain membership in the

Michigan Lakes & Streams Assn., to promote boater safety classes, to sponsor lake and community activities, like the annual picnic, the 4th of July boat parade, the local fireworks display, and the Memorial

Day bass fishing contest, and to advocate for improved water quality and vegetation control. Expenses formerly incurred for weed harvesting are now covered by the Special Assessment Tax District.

Open letter from Professional Lake Mgmt.

Dear LOW Property Owners:

Professional Lake Management is the company contracted to handle your weed control project, and we would like to update you on recent activities and upcoming plans.

The 2005 season provided time to establish a Special Assessment District and allowed PLM to collect the survey and water quality data required for a whole lake Sonar A.S. application in 2006. A Special Assessment District serves two functions: 1) It allows adequate funding for the project, and 2) it satisfies MIDEQ requirements for whole lake treatments.

Managing on a whole lake basis increases efficiency and allows for a greater range of management options. Currently, we are compiling the water quality survey data and requesting information from various state agencies/departments for obtaining the MIDEQ permit in mid February.

As we discussed at last year's Association meetings and public hearings, the major problem facing Lake of the Woods is the exotic/invasive species Eurasian Watermilfoil. Because Eurasian Watermilfoil is widespread on LOW, a large-scale Sonar A.S. treatment will be conducted to achieve lake wide control of this species.

The initial Sonar A.S. application will occur toward the end of April, 2006, once the lake has stratified (warmer water on top of cold water). This will ensure that the herbicide remains in the upper 10-15 feet of water where it can contact the plants. A second application will occur approximately three weeks later to "bump up" the concentration back to a 6 ppb concentration.

By mid May, weed treatments should be complete for the rest of the season.

Tentative treatment dates will be mailed in the spring. The MIDEQ does not permit the use of other herbicides the year of Sonar A.S. use.

Algae treatments may be necessary during the summer months either on a lake wide basis or through spot treatments. It is common for algae to grow in stagnant areas such as bays and channels, and these areas will most likely need periodic algae treatments.

Sonar A.S. is slow acting and gentle on the lake ecosystem. While effects can be seen in 3-4 weeks, complete control will most likely be achieved by late June to early July. At the extremely low rates permitted by the MIDEQ, Sonar A.S. is selective for Eurasian Watermilfoil.

Sonar A.S. does, however, have minimal effects on native species. Typically, native plants do not reach nuisance levels the year of treatment. In the years following the Sonar application, the focus of our weed management will shift from lake wide Eurasian Watermilfoil reduction to a monitoring and maintenance program. Whenever Eurasian Watermilfoil is found, it will be addressed immediately through spot treatments.

If native species become problematic, techniques can be used to provide relief of these species as well.

Please remember that the goal of management is to promote a healthy and balanced lake ecosystem. Exotic species control should be the primary goal of the program. The growth of native vegetation should be encouraged, but maintained at levels where recreational uses of the lake are not compromised.

Established native plant communities help deter the re-infestation of exotics as well as stabilizing bottom sediments

and promoting a healthy fishery.

Eurasian Watermilfoil will never be eliminated from Lake of the Woods. However, with proper management the negative impacts caused by this exotic species can be reduced considerably.

We look forward to working with you this season and improving the quality on Lake of the Woods in 2006 and in years to come.

Andy Tomaszewski

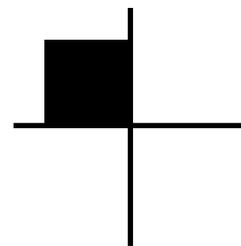
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Toll Free 800-382-4434
www.prolakemgmt.com



Lake of the Woods

Improvement Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 188 Decatur, MI 49045-0188

2006 Renewal & New Membership Application

Please print

Date: _____, 20__

Name(s): _____

Home/Mailing Address: *(where you prefer to receive Association mail)*

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Lake Address *(if different from above):*

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Service: Would you be willing to help on any committees or special projects (membership, picnic, boat parade, boater safety class, Secchi disc readings, etc.)?
_____ Yes _____ No

Membership Dues: **\$15.00** *(suggested amount)*

Payable to Lake of the Woods Improvement Association, Inc. each January

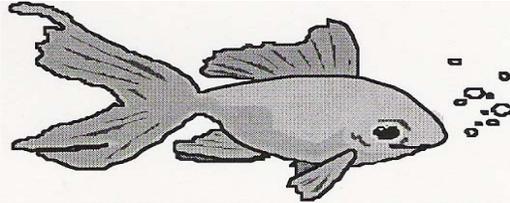
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**LAKE OF THE WOODS
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC**

Roger A. Mattens
Secretary/Treasurer
7132 Hazelwood Ave.
Richland, MI 49083-9727

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Schedule set for buoy markers

Association volunteers maintain safety buoy markers around the lake for everyone's benefit. Shallow water and no wake warnings provide a visual sign to boaters of possible danger and/or local speed ordinances.

In October the Board established the following schedule for buoy usage on Lake of the Woods:

Weather permitting, install buoys on first weekend in May; remove buoys on first weekend in October.

No boat should attach to any safety marker nor its anchor.

Board researches extra marine patrols with Van Buren Sheriff

Water safety is one of the primary concerns of residents and visitors to Lake of the Woods. The Van Buren County Sheriff's Department Marine Patrol is responsible for enforcement of Michigan's marine laws as they apply to inland lakes, such as ours.

The number of patrols, however, is limited, and the number of lakes is great.

Numerous times residents have commented around the lake, "Where's the deputy sheriff when you need him?" after witnessing a violation of a boating law.

Another comment heard is, "Why's the sheriff here during the week? We need him on the weekend."

The LOW Association Board of Directors has instructed the president to re-

search the feasibility of increasing safety marine patrols, especially on weekends and/or holidays. President Wayne Potter has been in contact with the Van Buren County Sheriff's office to discuss this issue.

One of the options being discussed is the Association paying off-duty officers to patrol the lake during high traffic periods. Potter reports that the Sheriff's Department is cooperative and sympathetic to the safety concerns of residents and is open to continued dialogue. Many lakes in the area, however, are voicing similar concerns.

Until a resolution can be achieved the best way to promote safe boating practices is for all members to model such behavior. Follow the laws. Inform visitors of Michigan safety regulations. Be vigilant and call VBCS @ 269-657-