

# Lake Currents

Lake of the Woods Improvement Association

## Protecting Our Lake for Another 30 Years

The Lake of the Woods Improvement Association seeks to protect and preserve our lake as it is an irreplaceable part of nature.

Lakescaping is shoreline landscaping that restores and preserves natural shorelines for today and future generations. Lakescaping strives to minimize soil disturbance; encourage infiltration; reduce runoff and erosion and improve wildlife and fish habitat. Lakescaping goals are to reduce noise; increase privacy; deter geese; reduce wave energy and correct drainage and erosion issues. Lakescaping uses native plants which create habitats that support our native fish, wildlife, birds and the organisms on which they depend.

Native aquatic plants are at the root of healthy lakes, and are essential for good fishing and clean water. Plants provide a place to live and food for fish, birds, turtles, and many other kinds of wildlife. They also produce the oxygen needed by fish and help preserve water quality by using nutrients—like phosphorus—that would otherwise be available for algae growth, protecting shorelines from erosion, and holding down lake bottom sediments with their roots.

Plant growth is important to the character of the lake. Emergent and floating-leaved

plants are valued for their aesthetic qualities and help provide a more “natural” buffer between a developed shoreline and the open water.

Inland lake shorelines have long since lost the native vegetative cover and natural woody structure that once provided an effective natural buffer between water’s edge and the surrounding land. This loss may lead to high volumes of nutrient laden storm water runoff from your riparian lakefront property directly into the lake. Creating a simple rain garden, positioned deliberately to collect rainwater runoff on your lakefront property can re-establish this natural buffer.

A rain garden is a shallow, bowl or saucer-shaped garden that is planted with deep-rooted native plants & grasses. It is located in your landscape to receive runoff from hard surfaces such as a roof, sidewalk or driveway. Rain gardens slow down the rush of water from these hard surfaces by holding the water for a short period of time and allowing it to naturally infiltrate into the ground.

Lakescaping and rain gardens are only a few ways to protect our lake for future generations.

To explore methods and practices for preserving or restoring natural features to your lakefront property shoreline,

visit [www.shoreline.msu.edu](http://www.shoreline.msu.edu) or [www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org)

## Board Approves Initiative To Restock Fish

The Board of Directors approved an initiative to restock Lake of the Woods with Walleye in 2010. The action that authorizes no more than \$5000 be spent on the project was taken at the September 13, 2009 Board meeting.

Since the Board requested input from the general membership last May it has been evaluating submitted suggestions on how best to invest some of the Association reserve funds in service or improvements for the lake. More lake residents asked the Board to consider such a fish re-stocking project than any other initiative.

Following research from different fish suppliers the Board learned that the best time to re-stock is between October 10 and November 1. This summer the Board will file a stocking permit with the Michigan DNR that limits no more than 10 fish per lake acre. As the fish mature, our Association anglers should reap the benefit of this investment in our lake’s natural resources

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### Reminder:

2010 dues renewal forms were sent out in January. If you have not returned your form with your \$10.00 dues please mail them to:

Lake of the Woods Improvement Association  
P.O. Box 188  
Decatur, MI 49045

Thank you for your support!

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## Boater Safety Course Set for June 19

The Association is please to announce it will sponsor the Annual Boating Safety Course at the Webster Library in downtown Decatur on Saturday June 19, 2010, from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

The course will be presented by the Van Buren County Sheriff Department in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. There is no charge for this course and successful students will be awarded their certificate at the conclusion of the class.

Michigan Law states: "Boaters born after

December 31, 1978 are REQUIRED to have a valid Boater Safety Certificate to operate a watercraft on Michigan waterways." The minimum age for operating a personal watercraft is 14. This course will fulfill that Michigan requirement.

Participants must be 12 years of age. PRE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED by June 11, 2010 Contact: Larry Ralston 269-423-8810. Give your Name, Address, Age, Date of Birth and Telephone number. Students are to bring along a sack lunch and a pencil and paper. We encour-

age adult participation to brush up on the latest boating rules and regulations.

It is also an excellent educational opportunity for anyone considering the purchase of a boat or present boat owners that have never taken a Boating Safety Course and learned the simple rules of the waterways.

The Lake of the Woods Improvement Assn. is pleased to cooperate with Law Enforcement agencies in order to make the Boating experience safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

## Annual Meeting and Picnic

The annual business meeting of the Association and member picnic will be held on July 10, 2010 at the Red Woolfe Park in Decatur, beginning at 1 p.m.

There will be four seats up for election at this year's Annual Meeting in July, three 3-year terms and one 2-year term. The 3-year seats currently held by Bill Kiss, Roger Mattens and Larry Ralston expire. All three individuals plan to seek

re-election.

A 2-year seat that is currently held by Sandra Eich who was appointed to fill out the first year of a 3-year term won by Clarence Kooy resigned his seat after serving only a short time. Our By-Laws required the Board to then appoint a person to fill the remainder of Kooy's first year and hold a special election for the remaining two years in 2010. Eich plans

to seek re-election for the term that expires in 2012.

All paid members in good standing are eligible to run for any of the four seats.

Following the annual meeting will be the picnic. Please bring a salad or side dish to share for the meal. The Association will provide the meat for grilling, the beverages and a special anniversary cake for desert. Hope to see you there.

## It's the Law

Every vessel towing a person(s) on water skis, a surfboard, or a similar device must have a person, in addition to the vessel operator, observing the towed person(s) at all times.

It is illegal to tow persons on water skis, surfboards, or any device of this type between:

- One hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise if towed behind a boat.
- One hour before sunset and 8:00 a.m. if towed behind a PWC.

Persons being towed must stay at least 100 feet away from:

- A shoreline (if operating in water less than three feet deep).
- Any moored or anchored vessel.
- A dock or raft.
- Any marked swimming area or person(s) in the water.

### Who must wear a PFD (life jacket)?

- Children less than 6 years of age must wear a Type I or Type II PFD when riding in the open deck area of a boat.
- Each person 12 years of age or older operating, riding on or being towed behind a personal watercraft (jet ski) must wear a Type I, Type II or Type III PFD (that is not an inflatable device).
- Each person less than 12 years of age riding or being towed, behind a personal watercraft (jet ski) must wear a Type I or Type II PFD.

**Reminder:** Lifejackets should be tested for wear and buoyancy at least once each year. Waterlogged, faded or leaky jackets should be discarded.

## Contest Corner

Congratulations to our latest winner, Elaine Loumbas for knowing that Andy Broekhuizen has been on the Association Board from it's inception.

Would you like a chance to win a Lake of the Woods T-shirt?

This edition's question is: In what year was the first sponsored boater safety course?

All entries must be submitted by email to: [webmaster@LakeOfTheWoodsMI.org](mailto:webmaster@LakeOfTheWoodsMI.org) or [RMattens@aol.com](mailto:RMattens@aol.com) (subject title LOW Contest)

All correct entries will be entered into a drawing and one lucky winner will receive a Lake of the Woods T-shirt. All entries must be received by June 1, 2010.

Good Luck and look for the winner's name to be in the September newsletter.





## Friends of the Lake : High's Marine

The second, in a three part series of Friends of the Lake is High's Marine.

Merton High operated Highs DX gas station, located at the corner of Phelps and Delaware Streets, at the stoplight in downtown Decatur. A sales rep convinced Mert to display a Flambeau outboard motor to see if they would sell, so with nothing to lose he gave it a try and Highs Marine was born.

In 1954 Mert signed up to sell Mercury outboards and would display them on stands in the window of the gas station. Soon after fishing boats leaning against the wall and Yellow Jacket wooden boats were displayed next to Graheks meat market. After a few years, and the need for more space to display different types and sizes of boats Mert purchased the old Decatur Motors building which was located at Highs Marine's current location. It was an L shaped block building with display windows facing the highway and it was large enough to display 4 boats. (A 15 ft boat with a 35 hp motor was a big boat in those days). The back room served as the service department with room for a couple of boats and a test take was added so motors could be tested.

As boat sales increased, customers asked for a place to keep their boats during the winter season, so a pole building was built next to the existing block building. While picking up boats from a distributor, Mert saw how the boats were stacked on the transom in rows waiting for delivery and decided that might be a good way to store boats. The building had a dirt floor and was tall enough to stand an 18' boat on end. The motors were removed and hung on a rack attached to the walls all the way around the inside of the building. A rope and pulley was attached to the roof truss, attached to the bow of the boat and the transom was set on tires to prevent damage. The smaller boats were hoisted by hand or garden tractor. After the boat was balanced upright it was chained to the truss, then the trailer was raised right next to the boat

and chained up. As boats continued to get larger with more horsepower and with the new Inboard/outboard gaining popularity, boats could no longer be stored this way. A new storage building was built just north of town on M51 to store the larger boats and pontoons, which were gaining in popularity.

In 1970 the current building was built, the west 1/2 of the showroom was framed and enclosed. Everything was moved from the old building and the east section was constructed over the space that the old facility had occupied. As the business continued to grow, more space was needed. The Eau Clare Packing Co. property was acquired. The building was enclosed and used for warehouse and the property helped to relieve the need for an area to park customer service boats. The old Decatur Auction property on the north sided of Edgar Bergan Blvd was purchased in 1987. Additional storage buildings were added in the late 90s

Mert's sons Mark and Mike began working for their father, learning the business as young teens. In 1983, Mark and Sally High purchased the business from Mark's parents, Mert and Phyllis.

High's Marne was the first dealer in Southwest Michigan to become a Marine Industry certified dealer. The business has been family owned and operated from its inception. Mike has over 40 years experience. Mark's daughter Melissa (Missy) and husband Brian Klimczak are active in the business and are in charge of the service/parts and sales departments. Mark's daughter, Sara finds time after her full time job to help out and makes boat covers.

Service manager Jim Overley has been here 37 years and is part of the family tree. Jim's daughter, Michele works during the summers. Kaye Johnson has been her for 12 years

According to Mark High, "We have al-

ways believed that outstanding customer service is our # 1 goal. We stand behind the quality products that we sell and try to keep our customers on the water."

High's Marine's dedication to service has been acknowledged by Mercury Marine which awarded them with the Mercury Premier Service designation which is highest level of service recognition available. They have also received CSI awards annually and twice have received Mercury Marine's Top Ten in the Nation Award.

High's Marine offers Lund, Starcraft, Bennington and South Bay boats. They carry Harbor Master lifts and Alumi-Span docks. They offer a wide variety of services for their customers. They offer Indoor & Outdoor storage, they have bays for inside rack storage as well as shrink wrapping service available for outdoor storage. They service all brands of boats and engines. They also perform Pontoon re-decking and re-fabricating. Complete In/Out service is available and most repair services are available on water for unexpected emergencies.

High's Marine has been a long time supporter of the Lake of The Woods Improvement Association. Beginning in 2010, High's Marine has volunteered to pull, clean, store seasonal water equipment and install the lake Association buoys at no charge which was a task that was previously performed by multiple Board of Directors members.

This volunteered service will benefit the entire lake community and the Lake Association would like to thank High's Marine for their generosity. This is another example how our business members provide "above and beyond" support for our organization's mission.

For hours of operation, online brochures, trade-in evaluation or to view a complete inventory of their new and used boats visit them at [www.highsmarine.com](http://www.highsmarine.com).

Or stop in for a visit and show your appreciation for their support at 409 E Delaware Street in Decatur.



*Lake of the Woods  
Improvement Association*

www.lakeofthewoodsmi.org

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*Servicing Lake of the Woods residents  
since 1980!*



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