



Van Etten Lake Association  
*SPRING* Newsletter 2015  
*Keeping Members Informed and Involved*



**President's Message**

Fellow Lake Residents,

The long cold winter is ending and the lake level is back up to summer standards. We have had issues controlling the depth of Van Etten Lake this winter when the new electrically controlled dam gates froze and malfunctioned. But all is well now.

In our last newsletter issue I reported that the Township was soliciting our input in the Special Assessment District renewal that was supposed to happen this year. That SAD renewal did not occur. The SAD was the money collected on your tax bill to target weed control. The outstanding balance in the prior SAD is all that will be allowed to be used in 2015. We have reason to believe that the funds will not be adequate to fight our weeds. We may lose some ground in our fight to control the weeds but we will try to see that funds are used where most effective.

The preliminary plan for the renewal was to assess the taxpayers the true costs. Costs would be finalized for the season with the Township fronting the funds and collecting the assessment on your winter tax bill. That plan is in its final stages but the Township is considering the collection of a handling fee of up to 5% on not only our SAD but any that the Township collects. When the time comes I will need everyone available to attend the trustee meeting that decides definitively on this issue. We will communicate via email blast.

While investigating the SAD issues I noticed that the annual Township property tax bill already charges you a 1% fee to handle taxes voted on by Oscoda residents. Our leaders need to hear that, although legal, the fee is unacceptable. To charge a handling fee for collecting our taxes is double taxation and should be illegal.

Weed control is necessary for Van Etten Lake. We need a vehicle to fund the fight against the weeds. However, we need one that is fair to our members. If any of you do not get our email blasts please send us an email to [ronm7240@gmail.com](mailto:ronm7240@gmail.com) and we will get you enrolled.

Ron Mathison  
President

The Van Etten Lake website has been upgraded to provide important and interesting information about the lake and the watershed -- please keep yourself abreast of what's happening by visiting [www.vanettenlake.org](http://www.vanettenlake.org). Feedback is always appreciated.

The PRVEL watershed information is also available on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pinriverwatershed](http://www.facebook.com/pinriverwatershed) - please click the "like" button when you visit and watch for updates on current projects.



---

**Board Members – 2014 - 2015**

Pres Ron Mathison	<a href="mailto:ronm7240@gmail.com">ronm7240@gmail.com</a>
VP Joe Plunkey	<a href="mailto:joeplunkey@hotmail.com">joeplunkey@hotmail.com</a>
Sec Carole Plunkey	<a href="mailto:caroleplunkey@charter.net">caroleplunkey@charter.net</a>
Treas Leonard Brockhahn	<a href="mailto:sbrock50@gmail.com">sbrock50@gmail.com</a>
Greg Cole	<a href="mailto:colescottages@gmail.com">colescottages@gmail.com</a>
Paul Rekowski	<a href="mailto:prekowski@yahoo.com">prekowski@yahoo.com</a>
Janice Wilber	<a href="mailto:gjwilber55@yahoo.com">gjwilber55@yahoo.com</a>
Tom James	<a href="mailto:peabody56@comcast.net">peabody56@comcast.net</a>
Celeste Creger	<a href="mailto:cacreger@ameritech.net">cacreger@ameritech.net</a>

**Event Calendar**

**Saturday, May 30 – Spring Meeting**  
Oscoda Twp Meeting Room – 10 AM  
**Saturday, July 11 – Annual Meeting**  
Oscoda Twp Meeting Room – 10 AM  
**Thurs, July 23 – PRVEL Meeting**  
Greenbush Twp Hall – 10 AM  
**Saturday, September 12 – Fall Meeting**  
Oscoda Twp Meeting Room – 10 AM

### Fishing Tournament Summary

The Conservation Districts second annual Fishing for the Future tournament in February came to an early close due to extremely cold weather and high winds. VELA was one of many sponsors for the event, which attracted 90 anglers - less than last year, but still considered a successful event. A total of 48 fish were caught, with perch being the catch of the day. All fish weighed in were on the small side, with first place in the adult group going to a .16 pound perch. The youth entry winner was a .04 pound perch. Outstanding prizes were awarded to the top ten winners in the adult and youth categories as well as random drawings. Examples included power augers, heaters, ice shanty, ice skimmers, sleds, rod and reel combos, a hunting blind and many others. Future plans are to hold this tournament annually on a “free fishing” weekend in February, so watch for upcoming dates to take part in this fun event to support the districts work and maybe win a prize!



### Walleye Stocking:



There has been a long running prescription for Van Etten Lake to receive walleye fingerlings (70,000 - 80,000) from one of the DNR rearing ponds in Michigan. Fish eggs are taken from either the Muskegon River or Bay De Noc and kept in hatcheries until ½ inch fry emerge, and those are shipped statewide to be reared for another month in special ponds (e.g. Tawas, Augres) before being delivered to their destination (1 ½ - 2 inches in length). Typically, Van Etten receives fingerlings every other year, and since we received 82,000 in 2014, none will be stocked this season.

There are many variables to consider when pondering why the number of walleye reportedly caught on Van Etten is not large in proportion to the number stocked, but suffice to say, the experience of trying to catch “the big one” is well worth the effort!

### Seawalls

Since traditional steel vertical seawalls are viewed as having "... significant adverse effects on the fishery, wildlife, and overall water quality of a lake...", the DEQ recommends the use of natural shoreline treatments, e.g. native plants/shrubs or natural stone (see picture). All require permits from Land and Water Management.



### Proposed Legislation Regarding Use of Boat Launch Fees

According to a recent article in the Michigan Lakes & Streams magazine, a new senate bill was to be re-introduced earlier this year related to the use of boat launch fees by local governments.

The proposed legislation would ... “authorize local units of government to pass ordinances to collect boat launching fees at municipality and township owned public boat launch facilities. Launch fees under the new law could not exceed \$10 per day for each boat or \$45 per boat annually. Fees collected ... **would be restricted to funding activities, associated with the prevention, control or eradication of aquatic invasive species.**”

It will be interesting to see what if any action is taken on this bill and how it might affect current policies regarding the use of boat launch fees on Van Etten.

## Septic System Regulations

Recently, the District Health Dept. No 2 proposed certain changes to ordinances regarding the placement and construction of new or replaced septic systems for the county. A meeting was held early in the year to invite the public to an overview of the proposed changes and ask any questions. This was followed with a review by the County Board of Commissioners.

As reported in the Oscoda Press, several complaints were registered with the county, regarding specifics, e.g. drain field requirements, especially by builders who viewed the changes as discouraging new property owners.

One of the DHD representatives pointed out that ... "the number one issue ... is public health. There is a reason why we made this change and that is to protect the health of not only the individuals who presently own that property ... but also who owns that property in the future."

If you are planning on updating your current septic system or considering new construction, please contact the health dept. for an update on current regulations.

And, as always, **remember to be good stewards** of the lake we love by periodically pumping out your septic tank, replacing outdated systems with efficient working ones, and examining your drain fields for signs of deterioration (yard odor, wet or mushy ground over it, or your plumbing backs up).

## Watershed Update:



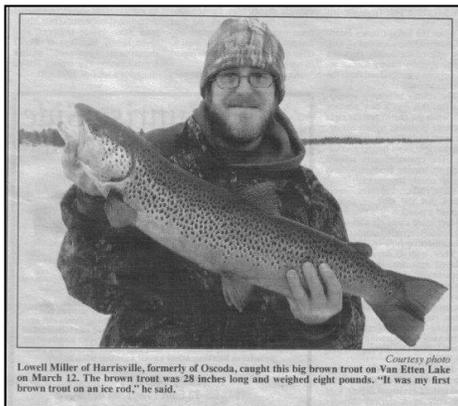
Looking forward to 2015 projects to be completed through our partnership with Huron Pines RC&D and monies from the Ausable River Restoration grant. Our focus will be on shoreline restoration and road stream crossing projects, along with the continuation of the invasive plant species inventory and treatment plan.

PRVEL has made application for a grant to fund new temperature data loggers to assist in DNR's program to monitor fishing status and new stream gauges to measure water levels. Hopefully, word will be received early this season if PRVEL has been awarded the \$2500 requested.

The Spring macroinvertebrate sampling program is still looking for volunteers to help in the field. Contact Arnie Leriche for more info ([aleriche526@gmail.com](mailto:aleriche526@gmail.com)) Tentative dates are Wed, May 13 and Sat, May 16, dependent on weather conditions and stream levels.

PRVEL and VELA are working partners in trying to improve the water quality of both the lake and the Pine River and gather data to help make good decisions regarding how best to manage our natural resources for all to enjoy.

Meetings are held quarterly, starting in January of each year and are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs of that month at 10 am – Greenbush Twp. Hall in Greenbush (on Campbell off US 23). Next meeting is Thurs, July, 23 – please plan to attend to get a better idea of how you can help.



Brown trout caught on Van Etten Lake through the ice in March - 28 inches long and weighing 8 pounds (Oscoda Press)



**Lawrence  
La Voie**  
BEACHES \* SEAWALLS  
LANDSCAPING  
WATERFRONT SERVICES \* CONSULTING  
BEACHES \* DECKS \* BOAT HOISTS  
2984 WOLVERINE EAST TAWAS, MI 48730 (989) 362-2758



**BOAT & DOCK**  
5400 N.US23 Oscoda, Mi 48750  
989-820-7266  
[contact@sunnybunns.com](mailto:contact@sunnybunns.com)  
[sunnybunns.com](http://sunnybunns.com)

## 2014 VAN ETTEN LAKE WATER QUALITY RESULTS

### SECCHI DISK CLARITY

The average of the weekly clarity measurements taken for 2014 was **7.7 feet**. The average for the summer of 2013 was **6.4 feet**. The 10 year average is **7.1 feet**. The average water temperature mid-lake over the summer was 67.5 deg. F. This compares to a 10 year average of 68.7 deg. F. The clarity and temperature measurements are taken weekly from mid-May to mid-September. As indicated by the trend line on the graph, there has been a trend to greater annual average clarity in the lake over the past 13 years.

### PHOSPHOROUS TESTING

The 2014 spring overturn phosphorus concentration was **26 parts per billion [ppb]**. The comparable concentration in 2013 was **23 ppb**. The spring result is thought to be a good estimate of the average phosphorus concentration in the lake. The 10 year average spring concentration is **24.0 ppb**.

The 2014 summer phosphorus concentration was **40 parts per billion [ppb]**. The comparable concentration in 2013 was **35 ppb**. The fall result is thought to be an estimate of the phosphorus remaining after the summer growth. The 10 year average summer concentration is **33.8 ppb**.

### CHLOROPHYLL A TESTING

This test is intended to help determine the relative amount of algae in the lake. The median results from the five monthly samples taken from May through September in 2014 were **2.0 parts per billion [ppb]**. The comparable 10 year median concentration is **5.4 ppb**. However, while an algae bloom occurred again last summer, it started later in the summer and did not last very long. As indicated by the clarity sampling and as the bloom was not unusually heavy, the scheduled sampling for toxins from the blue green component of the algae bloom was canceled.

Carlson TSI

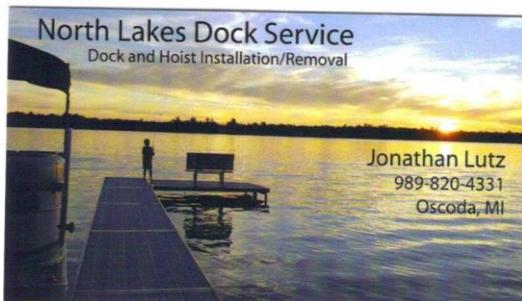
With an average score of 48 based on the Secchi transparency, Chlorophyll-a, and summer total phosphorus, the lake is rated between mesotrophic and eutrophic lake classification.

---

### Endowment Fund Balances \*

Endowment: \$12,360.00  
Reserve: 2,411.16  
Spendable: 2,383.61 (amount available  
for projects)  
Total: \$17,154.77

\* Sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to this fund, which was established to preserve and protect the lake through projects designed to benefit water quality, fish, and wild life - for the present and the future



### VELA INBOX ...



Got questions? Email Ron Mathison at [ronm7240@gmail.com](mailto:ronm7240@gmail.com)

To place a business ad in the newsletter, please contact Carole Plunkey at 739-8717