



# CRYSTAL WHITECAPS

The Newsletter of the Crystal Lake & Watershed Association

Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come.

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Spring 2018

## SWIMMER'S ITCH CONTROL 2018

Swimmer's Itch Solutions LLC (SIS) started its 2018 work season on Crystal Lake at the beginning of June, conducting bird surveys and collecting a few merganser hens for one of their scientific research projects. Its principal activity, trapping and relocating common merganser broods, began when broods began to appear on the lake. The team, headed by Dr. Curt Blankespoor, has reported that during the first week of June two broods (totaling two hens and eighteen ducklings) were relocated to the Hodenpyl Dam Pond on the Manistee River west of Mesick.

As described in the last issue of *Crystal Whitecaps* (13:2, Fall 2017), CLWA has contracted with SIS to carry out its swimmer's itch control program for the second consecutive summer. Trapping merganser broods and relocating them to other water bodies is a science-based method that removes the avian host of the parasite that causes swimmer's itch, thus breaking the parasite's life cycle and reducing the incidence of swimmer's itch-causing parasites in the water body.

The birds are relocated to waters lacking the essential snail host so that swimmer's itch cannot be disseminated. Biologists expect that the hatchlings will imprint on their new home and not return to their place of birth, thus gradually reducing the

merganser population on the infected lakes. One of the initiatives this year is to identify additional relocation sites so that the ones used last summer do not become over-loaded.

The local community can assist by reporting sightings of merganser broods via the CLWA website, [www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org](http://www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org), where a link from the home page opens a special SIS reporting form (also used for reporting swimmer's itch cases). Rapid on-line reporting was instrumental in expediting the capture of the broods managed so far.

New this year, the team is training two Frankfort public school teachers, who are expected to take over the common merganser trapping responsibilities in 2019. Merganser behavior makes trapping a difficult process, so the number of contractors knowledgeable of the techniques and specialized equipment has been very limited. Increasing the number of qualified contractors will expand the number of lakes that can combat their swimmer's itch and lower control costs for all.

This spring the Michigan Department of Natural Resources implemented a new permitting process to regulate common mergansers control measures. CLWA

successfully applied for a 3-year permit, thanks to the required support from the Benzie County Board of Commissioners and the local authorities surrounding Crystal Lake (Benzonia, Crystal Lake and Lake townships, Beulah village and city of Frankfort).

CLWA's participation as one of the lead organizations in the Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership ([www.MISIP.org](http://www.MISIP.org)) plays a crucial role in advancing the program on Crystal Lake. MISIP, now consisting of 31 lake associations, has successfully lobbied the Michigan state legislature to appropriate funds for swimmer's itch control (\$250,000 in both 2017 and 2018, with hope for continuation in 2019). Through these efforts, state leaders have recognized that swimmer's itch poses a threat to Michigan tourism and local economies. CLWA has received grant funding from this source to help support its costly trap-and-relocate program. MISIP also worked closely with the Michigan DNR in developing the new permitting process for trapping mergansers, so that the needs and situations of lake associations would be fully taken into account.

Reports on past swimmer's itch research and control programs on Crystal Lake can be found on the Swimmer's Itch page of the CLWA website: [www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org](http://www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org).



Composite image showing method for trapping merganser broods (courtesy C. Blankespoor)



Curt Blankespoor, Swimmer's Itch Solutions LLC, releasing trapped merganser hen

**YOU CAN ASSIST THE CLWA'S SWIMMER'S ITCH RESEARCH AND CONTROL PROGRAM BY REPORTING SIGHTINGS OF MERGANSER BROODS OR NESTS, OR CASES OF SWIMMER'S ITCH. YOU WILL FIND THE LINK ON CLWA'S HOME PAGE, [WWW.CRYSTALLAKEWATERSHED.ORG](http://WWW.CRYSTALLAKEWATERSHED.ORG).**

Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you for your ongoing support of our organization through your contributions of time and for your membership. Without your help we could not achieve our long-range objectives. The foremost of those is: "Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come."

This issue of *Whitecaps* comes with the announcement of our Annual Meeting and your proxy. I strongly urge you to attend. We will have special presentations by Dr. Curt Blankespoor of Swimmer's Itch Solutions (SIS) and Dr.

Jim Hamp, CLWA board member, with Dennis Wiand of Zero Gravity Aerial. Elsewhere in this issue you will find more about the important projects these individuals are leading for the CLWA this summer.

CLWA committee chairs and officers will also be there to meet you, hear your concerns, and answer any questions you might have.

Please make every effort to attend, but -- at the very least -- return your proxy to ensure a quorum. An envelope is

enclosed: if you have not yet renewed your membership for 2018, you may include dues as well.

Finally, I will reissue the challenge to check for your neighbors and friends in the Directory. If you do not see them, please encourage them to join and attend the Annual Meeting. It is their Lake, too!

**Dave Wynne**  
*CLWA President*

## COMPLETION OF AQUATIC PLANT SURVEY PLANNED FOR AUGUST

The CLWA will reach a major goal in August with the completion of the aquatic plant survey of the entire extent of Crystal Lake. This accomplishment will provide the comprehensive data needed to assess the status of invasive species in the lake and plan future remediation tactics.

Dr. Jim Hamp, CLWA board member, has led this project since 2016, carrying out a boat-based examination by means of a tossed rake that recovers plants from the lake bottom (see *Crystal Whitecaps* 13:2, Fall 2017; 12:2, Fall 2016). His crew plans to complete the remaining portion along the north shoreline from approximately the Crystal Lake Yacht Club to the Crystal Lake Marina.

Last summer Hamp joined forces with Dennis Wiand of Zero Gravity Aerial, which

performs photography from a drone, to experiment with this survey method as a supplement. Results were impressive, revealing plant beds in deeper areas not recognized previously and covering the expanse of water faster than is possible by boat. In late July, Wiand plans to complete the aerial portion of the lake survey.

Hamp and Wiand will discuss the ongoing survey at the CLWA annual meeting on July 21. Their exhibits, including Wiand's exciting aerial video, attracted considerable attention at the recent conference of the Michigan Lake Stewardship Associations.

Results of the survey to date have shown extensive infestations of Eurasian watermilfoil around the waterfront at Beulah. Smaller beds are present around the DNR boat launch at Mollineaux Road

and the secondary road end launch site at Lobb Road. Elsewhere in the lake E. watermilfoil rarely appears.

With the survey data in hand, the question of possible treatment will need to be confronted. Unfortunately the Beulah field is now too large for eradication, but attempts may be made on the smaller beds.

One clear conclusion from the aquatic plant survey is that invasive species are being introduced into Crystal Lake via boats that carry them from other waters. The best "cure" is to prevent this introduction in the first place, primarily by washing boats thoroughly before launching. The CLWA boat wash at Mollineaux Road continues to operate as a quick and easy method for responsible boating.



*Dennis Wiand, Zero Gravity Aerial, and Jim Hamp, CLWA, exhibiting the results of the aquatic plant survey at the Michigan Lake Stewardship Associations annual conference in April 2018.*

### BOAT WASHING "BLITZ" AGAINST AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

The Beulah Public Beach boat launch will host this year's free public outreach boat washing event. Join the CLWA, Benzie Conservation District, and the NW Michigan Invasive Species Network to learn the best methods, pick up information and giveaway items, and help us preserve Crystal Lake for future generations.

**SUNDAY, JULY 8 • 11 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**  
**BEULAH PUBLIC BEACH**  
**BOAT LAUNCH**



## FALL 2017 WATERSHED FIELD TRIP FOR BENZIE STUDENTS

Learning from our environment enables us to respond to challenges that confront it. For 25 years the CLWA Walkabout has helped local students learn from their immediate surroundings so that they can become the catalysts for meeting those challenges in the future. Each fall, in partnership with our local schools, the CLWA engages these future lake stewards in hands-on activities along the shores of Crystal Lake. Our aim is to show them not only the limitless opportunities for fun the lake offers, but the fragile nature of its ecosystems and the role we all play in maintaining the health of this valuable natural resource.

One hundred and fifty sixth and seventh grade students along with their teachers from Benzie Central and Frankfort-Elberta public schools participated in the 2017 Walkabout. Ed Hoogterp (Benzie County Drain Commissioner), Joel Buzzell and Gary Herbert (CLWA), Emily Cook (NW Michigan Invasive Species Network), and Jane Perrino and John Ransom (Benzie Conservation District) served as expert presenters, with logistical help from a dozen CLWA volunteers.

Walkabout Field Notebooks for each student provided a map of the lake and back-up questions and exercises related to the topics covered during the presentations: aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, the practice of boat washing to prevent invasive species, swimmer's itch, water quality, and the aquatic food chain. Thanks to a grant from the Benzie Sunrise Rotary, major improvements were made to the Notebook this year, adding waterproof paper and greater stability so they stood up better to outdoor use. Changes to the content aim to enhance their classroom use after the Walkabout as well.

A reduction in the number of site stops reduced travel time and expanded the learning segments at each location (Crystal Lake Outlet, DNR Boating Access Site at Mollineaux Road, and the CLWA boat wash). The presenters used the students' prior knowledge as a springboard for activities that would increase their understanding of the topics. All presenters took time to briefly introduce themselves, allowing the students

the chance to consider these watershed experts as possible career role models.

The students learned how to test the lake water for turbidity and pH, and wash a boat to ensure that all clinging weeds and aquatic creatures have been removed. They used their knowledge and imaginations to create fantastical invasive species, raising awareness of why such intruders are a threat to the lake environment. All the day's events were designed to demonstrate how the lake's beauty and health are intertwined to create a recreational and economic resource for our area.

Thanks to the continued support from our surrounding community, we look forward to Fall 2018's version of the event and the opportunities it brings area students. By working with local educators, the CLWA continues to develop ways to improve the learning experience and educational materials.

**Sue Brown,**  
*CLWA Walkabout Chair*



**Benzie Central students with teacher Daryl Bluhm and volunteer Jeanne McMillan studying the aquatic food chain at the Crystal Lake Outlet**



**Frankfort Elementary students conjuring invasive species at the DNR boat launch**

Planning for the 2018 Walkabout is now beginning. If you are interested in joining us, to spend a beautiful day in early October on the shores of Crystal Lake in the company of enthusiastic young people and lake-loving adults, contact the CLWA to become a volunteer.



## CRYSTAL LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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**CRYSTAL WHITECAPS** is published twice a year and is a benefit of membership in the Crystal Lake & Watershed Association. Back issues and membership information are available on the CLWA website: [crystallakewatershed.org/education/newsletter](http://crystallakewatershed.org/education/newsletter)

## CLWA ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING 2018

All are welcome to come and hear updates on the swimmer's itch control program, the 2018 aquatic plant survey, and other CLWA current activities.

**SATURDAY**

**JULY 21 AT 9:30 A.M.**

**CONGREGATIONAL SUMMER ASSEMBLY**

**COMMUNITY BUILDING**

### CLWA DIRECTORS AT THE 2017 ANNUAL MEETING



*Ted Fisher and Hugh Walton*



*Barbara Leonard, Tassie Boshier, and Wanda Shreiner*

## MEET THE CLWA!

The CLWA will be participating in these local events during the summer of 2018. Please visit our booth and say hello! Let us know what's on your mind. Information on protecting our watershed will be available. CLWA T-shirts, hats, and watershed maps will be for sale.

- |              |                                                                           |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 8       | "Landing Blitz" at the Beulah Public Beach boat launch, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. |
| July 25      | Congregational Summer Assembly Arts and Crafts Fair, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.    |
| August 4     | Beulah Sidewalk Sale 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.                                    |
| August 17-18 | Frankfort Art Fair                                                        |