



# CRYSTAL WHITECAPS

The Newsletter of the Crystal Lake & Watershed Association

Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come.

Vol. 17, No. 1

Summer Update 2022

## DNR HALTS MERGANSER TRAPPING FOR 2022

On March 28 the Michigan Department of Natural Resources informed the CLWA that the agency was cancelling all merganser trapping and relocation permits for 2022. The action is due to the outbreak this spring of “highly pathogenic” avian influenza (“bird flu”) in the southern part of the state, a contagious disease that can have a devastating impact on domestic birds and the poultry industry. The DNR is concerned that transferring wildfowl from one location to another will facilitate the spread of the virus.

As most Crystal Lake friends and residents know, the CLWA’s trapping and relocation of common merganser ducks over the last five summers has been the keystone to the reduction of swimmer’s itch among lovers of water sports. The interruption of this program is thus a great disappointment and raises concerns for the resurgence of this impediment to enjoyment of the lake.

CLWA and its collaborating partners appealed to the DNR to permit an alternative experimental project that would treat mergansers for the SI parasite without relocating them, but this too was denied. **So regrettably we are not asking the lake community to report sightings of merganser broods this year.**



Common merganser hen and brood

Despite this setback, the CLWA is continuing its efforts to better understand SI and to minimize its effects on the public.

**Please continue to report any cases that you experience to the link on the Home page of the CLWA website, [www.crystallakewatershed.org](http://www.crystallakewatershed.org).** Waterfront staff at the Congregational Assembly also are recording data from those who use their beach.

Those who are susceptible to SI should refresh their knowledge of steps they can take to reduce their contact with the swimmer’s itch parasite. Proven strategies include: swimming late in the day and avoiding onshore winds; swimming in deep water; applying waterproof sunscreen and reapplying often. There is some evidence that tightly woven, tight fitting swimwear (such as Rash Guard) with maximum coverage can be helpful. More



details can be found in the CLWA’s brochure, “Combating Swimmer’s Itch on Crystal Lake,” which is available on the CLWA website: [CrystalLakeWatershed.org/swimmers-itch](http://CrystalLakeWatershed.org/swimmers-itch).

Riparians may also have the opportunity to observe the location of merganser nesting sites, which also should be reported to the CLWA.

*Continued on page 2*

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



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Over the past two years Covid-19 and bird flu have joined aquatic invasive species and swimmer's itch parasites in challenging the CLWA's efforts to "protect Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come."

community who have diligently reported sightings of merganser broods and cases of swimmer's itch. We are all disappointed by this year's setback, but CLWA is committed to continuing its work to control this troublesome nuisance. We have learned a lot over 16 years of study, and hope to resume our proven trap and relocation program in 2023.

meeting on July 23, the "Keep Crystal Clear" fundraiser on July 30, and at area art fairs throughout the summer. It will be my last annual meeting as president, though I look forward to serving on our wonderful, dedicated Board in the future. It has been an honor to serve you and a special learning experience. Thanks for your support!

We thank our supporters and friends, including all those in the

The Board of Directors and I hope to see many of you at our annual

**Dave Wynne, CLWA President**

## DNR HALTS MERGANSER TRAPPING FOR 2022

*Continued from page 1*

These are typically holes in trees – not necessarily close to the water – where the female can be detected flying in and out before the brood is able to fly. Early this spring, before mergansers arrived, CLWA volunteers blocked two nests that had been identified

in previous years. This deterred the returning female from using this location again.

In addition to recording data on SI cases in 2022, the CLWA has contracted with Swimmer's Itch Solutions to continue its study of the snail infection rate. This research project consists of the collection of a sample of 200 snails from each of 10 locations around Crystal Lake (in 2020 an 11<sup>th</sup> site was added). The snails are examined for the presence of

the avian schistosome that causes SI on Crystal Lake. Beginning with a baseline study in 2016 (before merganser trapping and relocation began) and repeated in 2018 and 2020, the snail infection rate had decreased by 99%, a level considered "ideal." Swimmer's Itch Solutions will again collect over 2,000 snails around the lake in early July.

CLWA continues to thank the Crystal Lake community for its support that makes this work possible.



*Blocked merganser nest in tree near Robinson Road*



*Curt Blankespoor, Swimmer's Itch Solutions, studying snails*



*Avian schistosome cercaria that causes SI*



# “KEEP CRYSTAL CLEAR” FUNDRAISER RETURNS

On Saturday, July 30, from 4 to 7 p.m., the CLWA will host its 2nd “annual” Keep Crystal Clear event at Five Shores Brewing in Beulah. Last summer’s celebration gathered about two hundred friends of the lake (and friends of friends of the lake)

for music, food, drinks and heartfelt greetings after a year of isolation. Once again, Lindsay Saldebar and Tommy Heidt, grandchildren of two long-time CLWA Board members, are leading the arrangements in furtherance of the CLWA motto,

“Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come.”

Please join us! All proceeds go to support the ongoing work of the CLWA. Tickets can be purchased at the CLWA website (see “Calendar”) or at the door.



“Keep Crystal Clear” at Five Shores Brewing (2021)



Martha Perez-Sanz; CLWA Directors Tassie Boshier and Wanda Shreiner, “Keep Crystal Clear” (2021)

# PADDLING TO PROTECT CRYSTAL’S WATERS

Fans of paddle craft take pride in their healthy exercise and low impact on the environment as they glide quietly over the surface, looking down through clear waters to the lake bottom. They can ignore that big boat launch facility at Mollineaux Road (with its modern washing station) and just slide their craft off the beach for an outing. But paddlers too share responsibility for maintaining the exceptional water quality of Crystal Lake.

have a unique opportunity to detect invasive species at an early stage, which enables easier eradication and control.

For this reason, the CLWA welcomes the collaboration of these hobbyists. For those who want to protect the lake and also develop new appreciation for the natural features they observe, Michigan Sea Grant and MSU Extension offer **a free online course, “MI Paddle Stewards.”**

In fact paddle craft, with their easy portability, pose a special threat for the spread of aquatic invasive species. These vessels may not have all the nooks and crannies provided by motor propellers and boat trailers, but shreds of Eurasian watermilfoil and tiny quagga mussels can easily lurk on kayak rudders or in puddles at the bottom of a poorly drained canoe – and then find a new home when the craft visits another water body.

This program teaches skippers of non-motorized crafts to identify high-risk invasive species, properly clean a watercraft, and report invasive species using a free app. Consisting of five self-paced units (ca 30-45 minutes each), the course takes about three hours to complete, with the ability to pause and pick up later, as long as the user finishes by December 31, 2022.

Paddlers – with their slow pace and close observation of the water – also

To learn more and register, visit: [www.michiganseagrant.org/educational-programs/mi-paddle-stewards/](http://www.michiganseagrant.org/educational-programs/mi-paddle-stewards/)





## CRYSTAL LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 89 • Beulah, MI 49617

Tel 231/882-4001

Fax 231/882-7810

info@CrystalLakeWatershed.org

CrystalLakeWatershed.org

 Like Us on facebook.com/theclwa

### MEET THE CLWA!

The CLWA will be participating in these local events during the summer of 2022. 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 and hats will be for sale.

July 27 Congregational Summer Assembly Arts and Crafts Fair

July 30 Keep Crystal Clear Fundraiser, Five Shores Brewing, Beulah

Aug 6 Beulah Sidewalk Sale

August 19-20 Frankfort Art Fair

**Watch the CLWA website for possible changes and cancellations.**

#### 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)

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT THE LAKE THIS SUMMER?

## Remember Your Septic System

Are you having more visitors this summer? During these recent interrupted summers, have you maintained your septic system? It's easy to ignore it until it malfunctions! And a failing septic system contaminates ground water and nearby lakes and streams.

Septic systems are not complicated, but need four kinds of care:

-  Have a professional inspect and pump it frequently (usually 3-5 years)
-  Use water efficiently (repair leaks, install water-saving fixtures)
-  Properly dispose of waste (flush only toilet paper)
-  Maintain your drainfield (no parking or planting on it)

For details and helpful reminders, visit: [epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system](http://epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system)



## Control Your Fireworks

The CLWA urges all those around Crystal Lake to prevent fireworks debris from entering the lake and not to leave it along the shoreline where it can be washed into the water. Fireworks contain numerous chemicals and heavy metals and form additional ones when they are ignited. The fumes they create also contain sulfur, nitric acid and ozone which may precipitate onto the lake surface. Does your family want to swim in the shallow water where these substances have recently landed?

Michigan state law and local ordinances regulate the days on which consumer fireworks can be ignited, the types that may be displayed without a permit, and forbid their use on public property (including public beaches). Please follow these guidelines for a safe and healthy summer!