



THE HEALTH OF
HIGGINS LAKE

PROTECTING OUR WATERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

COMMITTEE REFLECTIONS

OCTOBER 2025

EXPLORING EVERY IMPACT

EMPOWERING EVERY VOICE

ENSURING A HEALTHIER HIGGINS LAKE



*facilitating
collaborative
effort*

STEERING COMMITTEE

Proposed Expansion:

- We're looking to expand the Steering Committee from five to seven members. This change would provide added flexibility, especially during the winter months when some members are away.

Improving Communication:

- The committee is reviewing how we report on sub-committee activities to ensure updates are clear, consistent, and informative.

Our Goal:

- To keep everyone informed and engaged in the ongoing work of the HOHL (Health of Higgins Lake) initiative.

SCIENCE

Document Database in Progress:

- Reports are being uploaded to the NEXTCloud (a centralized, secure database), creating a centralized, searchable repository.

Keyword Tagging Underway:

- Curators are reviewing and tagging documents with keywords and searchable terms to make future searches easier.

Purpose:

- This database will help track and analyze lake conditions and identify if additional studies or information are needed.

Comparative Data:

- Studies from other lakes are also being added for reference and trend comparison.



*exploring
every
impact on
lake health*



SEPTIC

Monthly Video Clips:

- Educational videos on topics like what not to flush, how septic systems work, and how they differ from municipal systems.

Data & Research:

- Working with the Central Michigan District Health Department to access digitized septic records in the FETCH GIS database

Septic Ordinance Exploration:

- Reviewing key issues like:
 - Failing or undersized systems
 - Systems near the lake or wells
 - Lack of inspection or maintenance data

Inspections & Standards:

- Evaluating inspection checklists and identifying qualified inspectors for systems with missing or outdated data.

Next Steps:

- Recommendations will be presented to the Planning Commission and Township Board.



IT

Centralized File Storage:

- All committees now have access to NEXTCloud, with dedicated storage space on the HOHL server for:
 - Meeting notes, reports, charts, graphs, personnel lists and general documents

Science and Communication Support:

- Collection and organization of lake-related reports, studies, and expert opinions.
- Website strategy and mass mailings

Training Provided:

- Training committee members to effectively use NEXTCloud and Zotero.

ROAD ENDS

- Road ends contribute to lake pollution through runoff and erosion.
- Past studies (1990s, updated 2010s) by the Road Commission identified key problem areas.
- Revisiting sites, collecting new data, and working with the Road Commission on a repair plan.
- Focus includes both Gerrish and Lyon Townships for full lake coverage.
- Fieldwork is nearly complete; a summary report is in progress.



COMMUNICATIONS

Email Campaigns:

- Watch for these monthly updates
 - *Committee Reflections*— a monthly summary of key updates from each committee.
 - *The Ripple Effect* – a mid-month spotlight on the work of one committee

Social Media & Website:

- Weekly Facebook posts are shared across 12 local community pages.
- Video featuring Jim Osling explained HOHL's mission and how it differs from other local organizations.

Collaboration & Research:

- A meeting with Professor Amanda Buday (GVSU) was held to explore a potential community-wide survey

Health of Higgins Lake

