

Committee Activity Report

Health of Higgins Lake Initiative Report to the Gerrish Township Board

November 12, 2025



Steering Committee

The Steering Committee's regular meeting, held on October 21, 2025, received reports from each of the committee chair people and provided the audience with an opportunity to ask questions about their activities.

HOHL Communication Committee Report

The Communications Committee continues to make steady progress in strengthening outreach and engagement efforts.

- **Email Campaigns**

Our email distribution list has grown to approximately 176 individuals plus 49 committee members addresses. Our plan to distribute two emails per month was completed. *The Ripple Effects* – Highlighted the Science Committee this month and was distributed on Oct 19th. *Committee Reflections* – Giving an overview of each committee's progress was distributed on Oct 2d.

- **Social Media & Website**

Facebook posts were made from the committee report submitted to the steering committee at the October meeting and public education opportunities. A total of 4 posts were made in October. Work is being done to allow the posts to be made from the township instead of an individual.

Some improvements have been made to the website, but it still needs work.

- **Community Outreach**

The communication committee is developing a full-page introduction to HOHL to be included with the winter tax bills.

- **Collaboration & Research**

Professor Amanda Buday of Grand Valley State University, has provided a quote for an area opinion survey \$8381. Full quote can be found on NextCloud/Subchairs/HL_survey_budget. This would be a lake specific in nature. The timing of the survey was decided to be in the spring when people are around. The process will be all electronic with email, Facebook and possible newspaper ad to direct to a site. Discussion had started but needs to be continued with the planning commission to see if we can combine or compliment efforts

- **Committee Development**

The committee met on October 1. Next meeting scheduled November 12.

Funding Subcommittee – October-November Summary of Activities

- **Donate button (status):** Waiting on IT for technical implementation. Funding is prepared to review processor options, fee handling, deposit flow, and transparency language as soon as an implementation approach is available.
- **Rolling funding-sources calendar:** Standing tracker to organize opportunities across rolling/quarterly/annual cycles.
- **Format:** Likely a spreadsheet for ease of filtering and updates. Suggested fields: To be determined
- **Location:** Stored in the Nextcloud Funding folder for shared access and version control; reviewed/updated on a regular cadence.

Next meeting: 20-Nov-2025 — target agenda includes donate-button status check, approval of the calendar template, and populating initial opportunities.

IT Subcommittee – October-November Summary of Activities

- **Zotero (macOS) issues:** Continued investigation and fixes for macOS-specific Zotero behavior to improve stability and smooth startup/updates.
- **Email delivery for Nextcloud / Communications:** Reviewed reported email delivery issues from Nextcloud and potential impacts on Communications workflows; isolated likely configuration points and queued remediation steps.
- **Donation button support for Funding:** Provided technical guidance on implementing a Donate option, including basic integration considerations and coordination points for downstream processing.
- **General maintenance & backups:** Performed routine maintenance, health checks, and backup verifications to keep services reliable and recoverable.
- **Zotero literature management:** Continued partnering with the Science subcommittee to load studies and references, organizing libraries and metadata for easier retrieval and citation.
- **Next meeting:** Scheduled for 19-Nov-2025.

Road Committee report

- Chairman updated the group on the Steering Committee meeting on 10/21.
- Don turned in his Lyon Township data sheets and photos.
- Kevin H. has provided his as well.
- Tim's are now complete on 10/30 and Pat H. will provide his by the 11/6 meeting.
- Jean distributed a number of older documents from the last road end survey and 319 grant information. She would like to help in collection if possible.
- Discussion on who still had data sheets to be completed and returned. Don, Kevin and Tim offered any help needed.
- Tim and Don to schedule a follow-up meeting with HLF Representatives to discuss Fertilizer use/ possible bans and or Ordinances for limiting use near open waters in the Higgins Lake watershed.
- Tim will forward 2010 equations on sediments and contaminants to Brad Gibson for Science Committee review.
- Future meeting schedule as follows.
 - 11/6 and 11/20 regularly scheduled.
 - 11/13 Special to complete remaining road end data collection.
 - ** Steering Committee 11/18 to hopefully provide them with an overview of what we have found.

Science Committee

Our eight workgroups, or sub-subcommittees, are busy working. Each workgroup is assigned a “problem” to study. The committees are:

- Near Shore Water Quality
- Invasive species
- Groundwater and Drinking Water Contamination
- Watershed Quality
- Changing Fisheries
- Deep Water Quality
- Recreational Activities
- Non-Nutrient Contamination

Each problem has a list of questions, created by the entire Science Committee, for the subcommittees to address.

The process each sub-committee will utilize to address the questions has been established. In its’ simplest form, each sub-committee will:

- Study the questions posed for each problem.
- Gather data
- Evaluate the data
- Analyze the data
- Draw conclusions and draft a report.

The Science Committee will now meet monthly. The agenda for the next few months will be updated by the subcommittees with feedback and input from the Science Committee members.

For the next few months the Science Committee will be meeting the third Wednesday of the month.

Septic Committee

The Septic Committee met on October 1 and Oct 15, A third meeting was postponed at the chairman's request.

The primary focus of the Septic Committee is the development of an ordinance to be considered by the Township Board for eventual adoption. The Committee has prepared a list of Attributes that they would like to incorporate into an ordinance. The list was reviewed and vetted by the committee and used as a base for development. As the document evolves, it will get input from the Health Department and Steering Committee, before it is reviewed by the Township Board for potential action. Some of the topics discussed include:

- Next draft of the List of Inspectors was revised by Health Department and made available.
- Domestic water wells continue to be a topic of consideration and will be integrated into the draft ordinance
- Work continued on the development of a list of attributes that we would like to see addressed in an ordinance. The Committee settled on a list of over 50 items that are important for consideration
- A draft Septic Ordinance has been prepared for review by the Committee. This draft is currently based on a combination of other ordinances with the insertion of the Attributes developed by the committee.
- The Committee will be concentrating on the Draft Ordinance this month and subsequent review by the Health Department before sending it off to the Steering Committee for comments.

The Sub-Committee reviewed a variance pending on a property in the Township. Current parcel is small and low. The owner has proposed a new septic /drainfield but is still slightly non-compliant. To resolve the situation, they plan to install an anaerobic treatment system bring the system very near compliance. The Health Department has approved the proposal.

Work on the Purple Dot project continues. Gerrish is nearly complete, and the volunteers have moved on to finish Lyon Township. The Health Department is soliciting funds from the area to assist in getting this work completed by using their staff and that of FETCH. This is likely the most critical work being done at this time. Once complete, we will be able to generate informational letters to the residents as to the status of their STD's according to the records at the Health Department. Completion of the status information will also allow for better analysis of the overall condition of the STD's throughout Gerrish and Lyon.