



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

A Monthly Update Highlighting One Committee's Progress

MARCH 2026

**EXPLORING EVERY IMPACT
EMPOWERING EVERY VOICE
ENSURING A HEALTHIER HIGGINS LAKE**

HOH-lake.org or HOHL@gerrishtownship.org

AT A GLANCE

Science Sub Committee
Aquatic Invasive Species

- Higgins Lake currently has seven known aquatic invasive species
- There is currently no known way to eradicate any of those species
- We are in “control” mode for three plant species.

INVASIVE SPECIES Understanding Our Unwanted Guests

Higgins Lake is home to **seven invasive species** that challenge the lake's long-term health. While they can't be eliminated, understanding them is key to managing their impact.

Invasive plants (actively managed):

- **Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM)** – Identified around 2005; fast-growing and forms dense mats.
- **Starry stonewort (SSW)** – Found in 2015; algae that creates thick underwater growth.
- **Curly leaf pondweed** – Newly detected; grows early, then dies back and releases nutrients.

Invasive animals (no practical controls):

- **Quagga mussels** – The most aggressive invader; live directly on the lake bottom.
- **Zebra mussels** – Attach to hard surfaces and outcompete native species.
- **Asian clams** – Filter feeders that disrupt nutrient cycles.
- **Banded mystery snails** – Can reach high densities and crowd out native snails.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?



- Unchecked invasive species accelerate **eutrophication**, fueling excess plant growth and oxygen loss. Quagga and zebra mussels now dominate the phosphorus cycle—filtering nutrients, then fertilizing deep vegetation (40–70 feet). When that vegetation dies in winter, oxygen levels drop, threatening fish and overall lake health.

COMING NEXT MONTH What's Being Done to Control Invasive Species

- What's being done – **DASH boat harvesting, targeted treatments, and prevention efforts.**

The next Steering Committee meeting is the 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7 PM at the hall.
Plan to attend and participate! For more information, go to the website or on Facebook at Gerrish Township Health of Higgins Lake.