



THE HEALTH OF
HIGGINS LAKE

PROTECTING OUR WATERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

COMMITTEE REFLECTIONS

JANUARY 2026

EXPLORING EVERY IMPACT

EMPOWERING EVERY VOICE

ENSURING A HEALTHIER HIGGINS LAKE



STEERING COMMITTEE

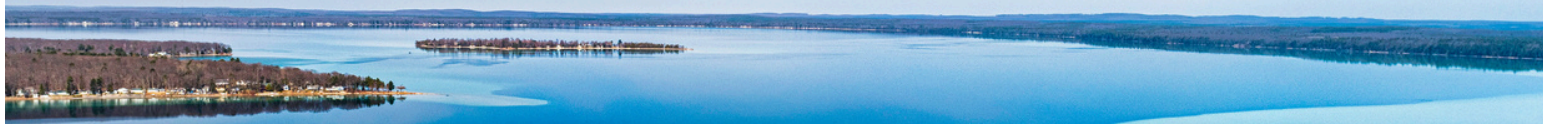
- The Steering Committee met on November 18th. Monthly updates were reviewed, and the audience was given an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.
- The Steering Committee welcomed Don Chaney, whose family history dates back to the early 1900's.
- The Steering Committee continues to operate under the Open Meetings Act on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

SCIENCE

- Activity remains steady as sub-committees (Near Shore Water Quality, Invasive Species, Groundwater and Drinking Water Contamination, Watershed Quality, Changing Fisheries, Deep Water Quality, Recreational Activities and Non-Nutrient Contamination) continue reviewing approximately 50 scientific studies.
- While progress was initially slow due to the volume of material, work is now moving forward.
- Eight sub-committees are addressing key lake-health issues using a shared, step-by-step review and analysis process.
- The Science Committee meets monthly on the third Wednesday, with updates provided by each sub-committee.

Health of Higgins Lake





SEPTIC

- Focus remains on developing a septic ordinance for future Township Board consideration.
- A revised draft ordinance incorporating committee input is nearly ready for submission to the Steering Committee.
- CMDHD, through the Purple Dot Project, is cataloging septic system records in the FetchGIS system:
 - About 3,700 on-site systems exist, with records for roughly 2,700.
 - The remaining 1,000 systems are the primary focus of the ordinance inspection process.
- Many existing records are incomplete and will require follow-up.
- Additional funding from HLPOA, HLF, and Friends for Clean Water has enabled completion of this record cataloging in FetchGIS system, improving data accuracy and future analysis across Gerrish and Lyon Townships.
- A grant application is in progress to support continued data capture and documentation.

ROAD ENDS

- Road-end data sheets and photos are now complete.
- A follow-up meeting with the Higgins Lake Foundation will be scheduled to review fertilizer use and potential restrictions near open water.
- Sediment and contaminant reference materials from 2010 will be forwarded to the Science Committee for review.

IT/FUNDRAISING

- Zotero (macOS) is fully operational and has been tested with multiple users; no outstanding issues remain.
- Ongoing support is being provided to the Science Committee by loading new studies into Zotero, verifying metadata, and organizing the research library.
- The committee is working with the township to establish an official PayPal account for the HOHL Donate button; website implementation will follow once the account is in place.
- A rolling funding-sources calendar is being maintained to track grant opportunities across rolling, quarterly, and annual cycles, with refinement of update procedures underway.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Outreach and engagement efforts continue to make steady progress.
- The Committee Reflections and Ripple Effects email updates were distributed and shared by partner organizations, expanding community reach.
- Social media is now managed under the township account, with regular posting and basic tracking of community feedback.
- The committee participated in a local outreach event, collecting email signups and connecting with local media.
- A proposed community survey and related funding requests are on hold pending further planning.

