

June 2026 Monthly HOHL Committee Reports

Communication Committee – Sue Gelderbloom, Chair

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

- **Email Campaigns**

Our email list is growing slowly. The June *Ripple Effect* was focused on the Higgins Lake Watershed density map. The June *Committee Reflections* covering May's meetings was published. We are moving forward with using Constant Contact to manage our emails. Expect them to look different soon.

- **Social Media & Website**

- We are continuing to post frequently on **Facebook**.
- **Instagram** account has been approved and is being set up.
- A **YouTube** channel has been started and we are collecting videos. One type of video is of HOHL members who answered the question "why are you part of HOHL" 90 seconds long. The second set of videos is with community members who answered the question "What do you love/like about Higgins Lake?" and is less than 60 seconds long. These can be of adults or children. A photo release form is in NC>communications>videos and in NC>SubChairs. These videos will be used in our social media outreach.
- We have gains support to test **Geofencing** for the month of July and August. Geofencing allows us to pinpoint an audience that is in physically in the Higgins Lake area along with other criteria. This will allow us to "push" impressions by way of text messages, Facebook, specific web page and other. We are new at this but hope this is a highly effective way to reach people around the lake.
- The **website** had had a facelift with the help of the IT committee. No extra design support is needed at this time. However, in the process we seem to have lost our analytics.

- **Community Outreach**

We are attending or providing materials to **associations** meetings. We were involved with two in June, have six scheduled in July, two in August, and three in September.

We will be selling HOHL **Tee shirt** off the website for all that are interested. They are heather gray with the logo on the front and the tag line on the. We will be ordering extras to have available for the HL Celebration

"Celebrate Higgins Lake and Beyond" outreach is for August 8th at the Gerrish township marina. We currently have 9 presenters. The HL Foundation will be there with their "Be Well Wise" water testing kits. Planning meeting will occur in July.

- **Collaboration & Research**

The committee continues to collaborate with the Higgins Lake Watershed Information Map effort.

- **Committee Development**

The committee met on June 2, June 11 and June 23. We are scheduled to meet again on July 7 and July 21.

Fertilizer Committee – Reorganizing committee – No report as of 7-8-26 – Tim O’Rourke, Chair

Funding Committee Report – Catherine Voigt, Chair

The Funding Subcommittee continues to track the status of the EGLE grant it submitted. A decision is expected any day.

It is working with the Steering Committee and other subcommittees to identify current and future funding needs for HOHL activities and funding sources to meet these needs. The committee would like to develop both revenue and expense projections to assist with planning.

The committee met with Jim Anderson to get a better understanding of the HOHL budget and the Township’s existing accounting and budgeting processes to determine how the subcommittee might be helpful to the Steering Committee in managing and reporting HOHL financial transactions.

IT Committee - Ed Panyard, Chair

- Processed the latest CMDHD data updates for the Higgins Lake Watershed Information Map work, including reference snapshot comparison, rebuild and QA review, and preparation for continued parcel/map validation.
- Continued work on the Watershed Information Map data pipeline, including database/scoring stabilization, SQL-backed map QA testing, and documentation needed to keep future updates repeatable.
- Worked through storage and space issues affecting the HOHL data/Nextcloud environment and related project work areas, including cleanup/review of large project data and backup/recovery considerations.
- Supported the geofencing outreach project by helping review campaign and technical requirements, coordination needs, landing-page considerations, and reporting/dashboard expectations.
- Provided IT support for HOH-Lake.org website work, including LocalWP/backup restoration planning, repository/workspace setup, and review of website improvement items.
- Assisted with HLPOA dive media/data organization planning, including cataloging support, timestamp/GPS workflow review, and preparation for future photo/video use by HOHL.
- Continued routine IT coordination, including Nextcloud, Zotero/data-library, committee support, and monthly IT planning.

Road End Committee – Tim O’Rourke, Chair

The committee is one area short in producing a comprehensive spreadsheet on all sources (Batton Drain). We have the data and photos to be added.

We met on the 9th and agreed/discussed the following. We will begin polishing up our data sheets (entire lake). We will discuss fertilizers after road end data report is finalized. HLU has agreed to supply collection materials and testing for runoff at the 9 Gerrish problem areas.

The RCRC has collected additional information on the 6 high producing road ends. They have done some work but resolution is still in progress. I believe that they will complete all the agreed to work by fall at no cost to us.

We still need to update pages from the 2010 report for inclusion into our 2025/26 report.

Science Committee – Brad Gibson, Chair

Below are the notes from our last meeting on July 1. It gives a nice overview of what we are working on. Our next meeting is August 5. In addition to committee work we will have multiple booths from the Science Committee at the HOHL Expo on August 8.

Health of Higgins Lake (HOHL) Science Committee

Condensed Meeting Minutes

Date: July 1, 2026

1. Review of Previous Meeting Notes

- Previous meeting notes reviewed.
 - Amendment requested to include the **Higgins Lake Land Conservancy** among organizations coordinating standardized sampling protocols.
 - Amendment accepted.
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2. Higgins Lake Community Expo (August 8)

Discussion

- Planning continues for the August 8 Community Expo at the Gerrish Township Marina.
- Multiple science-related displays are confirmed, with additional presenters still being recruited.
- Interactive exhibits and family-oriented activities are being developed.
- Booth layout remains under development.

Decisions

- Science, Septic, and IT exhibits should be located adjacent to one another if possible.
- Individual exhibit needs (tables, power, monitors, printed materials, etc.) will be collected before final layout.

Action Items

- Committee members wishing to participate should notify Expo organizers.
 - Submit equipment and printing requests by mid-July.
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3. Geofencing Public Education Initiative

Overview

A geofencing communication system is being developed to provide location-based educational messages to visitors around Higgins Lake.

Potential uses include:

- Clean, Drain, Dry reminders
- Boating regulations
- AIS prevention
- Public restroom locations
- Links to HOHL and HLF educational webpages
- Short educational videos

The committee discussed:

- Privacy considerations
- Demographic reporting
- Message effectiveness
- Costs based upon advertising impressions
- Website landing pages for specific topics

Decisions

- Proceed with evaluating geofencing as a public education tool.
- Initial implementation will focus on simple text messaging before expanding to multimedia content.

Next Steps

- Present proposal to the HOHL Steering Committee.

- Continue vendor evaluation.
- Develop initial educational messaging and website landing pages.

4. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Update

Progress

Following discussions with senior DNR leadership:

- North and South State Parks will begin limited inspections of arriving boats.
- Staff will visually inspect for aquatic invasive species and direct boaters to remove vegetation before launching.

Concerns

- West DNR Launch remains unstaffed.
- No inspections or educational activities will occur at that location this season.

Planned Activities

HLPOA volunteers will again collect launch data including:

- Boat origin
- Previous waterbody visited
- Recent launch history
- Presence of aquatic vegetation

This information will continue supporting long-term DNR engagement.

Committee Assessment

Members viewed DNR participation as a significant first step despite limited implementation.

5. Recreation Committee Report

The Recreation Committee provided additional information regarding the geofencing initiative and its role in improving visitor education and outreach.

6. Deep Water Committee

- Meeting scheduled for the following week.
- No additional report.

7. Nearshore Committee

Updates

- E. coli report is substantially complete pending a final scientific addendum.
- Swimmer's itch has emerged as a priority issue for 2026.
- Committee agreed swimmer's itch should become part of the Nearshore Committee work plan.

Discussion

Members reviewed continuing challenges involving:

- Federal permitting
- Merganser management
- Relocation versus euthanasia
- Regulatory barriers despite available scientific solutions

No formal action was taken.

Decisions Summary

- Add Higgins Lake Land Conservancy to coordinated sampling partners.
- Continue planning for August 8 Community Expo.

- Advance development of geofencing as a public education tool.
- Support continued AIS monitoring and DNR collaboration.
- Add swimmer's itch to Nearshore Committee priorities.

Septic & Ground Water Committee – Jim Ostling, Chair

The Septic Committee met June 9 and June 23 as scheduled. Our regular meeting for July 14 has been cancelled, and our only regular meeting will be on July 28.

Septic Ordinance Draft Submitted – I will attend the Planning Commission as needed to address any questions regarding the Septic Ordinance.

Water well test – (this is a repeat from last month's report) Last month I reported that I sent a FOIA request to the CMDHD for any information they may have on water well testing results. I received the results as follows:

There are 273 tests in the list.

The list included data on 181 locations

91 retest identified

Sixteen of the tests are prior to 2000

35 do not record a nitrate level or listed as not detected

Nitrate levels from – zero to 23.0

18 sites had Nitrate levels over 10ppm

In many cases, this data is missing, incomplete or old. The bottom line is that there are only about 100 test locations that are within the last three years and can be used as current information.

Be Well Wise – The HLF is starting a new water well testing program for residents of Gerrish and Lyon township. We are not directly involved with this testing program but certainly support the effort. It is important that people get their water tested regularly and this program is a good way to get that started.

New Map – I presented the concept of the LIDAR map that I introduced last month to the Steering Committee on June 16. It was presented for review and solicited approval by the Steering Committee to seek sources of funding. I have received good feedback about this project and feel it will be a good educational and research resource.

Data update - I requested and received a new data update from the Assessor and the CMDHD. This update will provide us with the information that is filed with the Health Department as of June 1 for both Gerrish and Lyon Township. Ed Panyard is now updating the database with new information

Statewide Septic Ordinance – The Michigan Senate approved their version of a statewide septic regulation. Michigan is the only state in the country that does not have laws concerning the regulation of on-site septic systems.

Septic system evaluations would immediately begin after the rules are put in place, Singh said Tuesday. A decade after those rules are put in place, systems that are 20 years old or older would need to be evaluated once every 10 years. Systems that have not been evaluated or are within 500 feet of surface water,

or a high-risk erosion area, must receive an evaluation, Singh said.

Lake Saver Days – On June 2, I did a presentation to the fourth-grade class about septic systems! We talked about the 3 P's and what not to put into the toilet. I borrowed a poly septic Tank from Sergeants Septic and mocked up a drainfield and a toilet. The whole Lake Saver day program was a big success, and I was happy to be a part of it.

Celebrating Higgins Lake – The Communications Committee has been planning for the Celebrating Higgins Lake expo on Aug 8. The Septic Committee will be in attendance and display the mapping that we have done, as well as other educational topics.

Chair Comment - The Septic Committee has had some spirited discussion regarding the timing and approach to the Septic Ordinance. All discussion within the committee that leads to a solid consensus among the members is healthy. Once that consensus is firm, its findings should be shared with a broader group and eventually the public. That frank committee level discussion leads to a more robust end-product. The process of getting there sometimes takes time and focus.