

July 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**

We have started using Constant Contact to manage our email list and to send out emails. With Constant Contact when someone signs up for our publications, they are automatically added to our database without anyone having to manually add them. This service also gives us a better chance of the email to be delivered to an inbox and not to email junk. The service also allows our email to include flyers without requiring a clip to see it. Currently our email list is just under 400. The July *Ripple Effect* was the flyer for the *Celebrate Higgins Lake* event on Aug 8th. The July *Committee Reflections* covering June's meetings was published

- **Social Media & Website**

- We are continuing to post frequently on **Facebook** and **Instagram**
- **Instagram** account has been approved and is being set up.
- Our **YouTube** channel is up and we continue to collect videos. One type of video is for members of HOHL answering the question “why are you part of HOHL” 90 seconds long. The second set of videos is for anyone with the question “what do you love/like about Higgins Lake” less than 60 seconds long. These can be of adults or children. A photo releases form is in NC>communications>videos and in NC>SubChairs. These videos will be used in our social media outreach.
- Our **Geofencing** campaign has been defined and consists of 4 targeted area.
 - 1) Campgrounds
 - Messages are:
 - Leave only footprints
 - Pick up your trash
 - 2) On the water
 - Messages are
 - Interactive map with facilities
 - Michigan boater's guild
 - Drawing for \$100 gas card
 - 3) Higgins Lake Locals
 - Message are
 - Preserve the turquoise – do your part
 - 4) Larger area of locals
 - Messages are
 - The water we love/ The future we protect. Get Involved
- The geofencing campaign began on July 28th. However, as of early August we are experiencing some issues that are being worked on.
- Late month **website** facelift has experienced some bumps in usability. We are working these out with the of IT committee. Website traffic has increase significantly since the geofence has started however there is a glitch somewhere as the traffic has not generated any new emails or applications for the gas card.

- **Community Outreach**

We are attending or providing materials to **property associations** meetings We attended 5 association meetings in July, We have 2 scheduled in August and 3 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 back.

“Celebrate Higgins Lake and Beyond” outreach is for August 8th at the Gerrish township marina. We will have the following presenters:

Roadends/Fertilizer
Watershed Interactive Map
Septic Committee
Water Testing - FREE
Fisheries
Higgins Lake Bottom
Aquatic Invasive species
HOHL Steering Committee
Science
Higgins Lake Watershed
Muskegon Watershed

In addition, for fun we will have:
Hot Dogs / chips / ice cream bars/ water
Bounce house
Adult and Child Scavenger hunt
Give aways and lots of swag

- **Collaboration & Research**

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

- **Committee Development**

The committee met on July 7 and July 23 and Aug 4.

Fertilizer Committee – Tim O’Rourke, Chair

This committee will meet August 6 at 5:00PM. This meeting will be attended by the Road End and Fertilizer members.

Funding Committee Report – Disbanded and incorporated into the Steering Committee

The EGLE grant revised budget was submitted. Revisions reflected the changed needs of the subcommittees since the grant was originally submitted.

New project proposals will be channeled through and tracked by the Steering Committee to develop both revenue and expense projections to assist with planning. Catherine Voigt will continue to work with the Steering Committee and other subcommittees to identify possible grants for HOHL activities.

IT Subcommittee – Ed Panyard, Chair

- Continued development and QA of the Higgins Lake Watershed Information Map, including SQL-backed rebuilds, Apache-published map outputs, build provenance, map visibility/default display refinements, and validation of generated outputs.
- Advanced the parcel documentation score work, focusing on an objective 0-4 score based on available parcel, septic, well, inspection/evaluation, and water-testing documentation.
- Processed and reviewed updated CMDHD septic and water-testing data, including source/provenance tracking, database import validation, and preparation of data for committee review and map use.
- Added and refined map reference layers and usability features, including Higgins Lake watershed context, PLSS/section overlays and labels, clickable section details, and ongoing review of public-facing display choices.

- Supported HLPOA dive video and dive-location work, including organization of video/media materials, review of GPS/timestamp information, YouTube and website planning, and preparation to integrate dive locations into the Watershed Information Map as a toggleable layer.
- Supported HOH-Lake.org website and public communication work, including Elementor/page planning, YouTube link organization, full-width/header-footer considerations, and continuity with the existing website pattern.
- Supported the geofencing outreach project, including campaign and landing-page coordination, newsletter signup considerations, media/asset review, and technical support for reporting and follow-up.
- Continued HOHL data infrastructure and project workflow support, including storage/space management, Nextcloud/Zotero data-library support, HLPOA document recovery planning, Apache publishing workflow review, Git/Codex-assisted development, and ongoing committee IT support.

Road End Committee – Tim O’Rourke, Chair

This committee will meet August 6 at 5:00PM. This meeting will be attended by the Road End and Fertilizer members.

Science Committee – Brad Gibson, Chair

The Science Subcommittee met on July 1, 2026. We have two meetings scheduled in August, on the 5th and 19th, at 1:00 p.m.

Key Updates

- Committee members are preparing presentations for the August 8 HOHL Expo.
- Forty new reports and studies have been identified through AI-assisted searches and are currently being reviewed and curated for inclusion in our database.
- By the end of August, we expect to provide the Steering Committee with summary reports from each subcommittee outlining:
 - Accomplishments to date
 - Remaining work items
 - Estimated timelines for completing outstanding tasks
- The Near Shore Subcommittee has successfully resolved its internal differences and is continuing its work in a productive manner.
- Science Subcommittee members continue to review and analyze available data to support the project's objectives and recommendations.

The Science Committee continues to make progress toward completing its assigned objectives.

Septic & Ground Water Committee – Jim Ostling, Chair

The full Septic Committee did not meet in July. The July 14 meeting was a scheduled cancellation, and the chair was out of town on the meeting scheduled for the 28th. Additionally, we have given up our regular scheduled meeting on Aug 11 for a joint meeting with the Township Planning Commission.

Septic Ordinance Draft Submitted –The Township Planning Commission continues to review the draft ordinance. We have given our regularly scheduled meeting date on Aug 11 to the PC for their meeting Mark Jarski from the Health Department will be in attendance to answer questions and provide insight on the ordinance.

I have met with the chair of the PC to discuss the draft Ordinance as they continue their work. One of the key factors of an eventual ordinance will be the need to gather information and inspections on individual properties in the Township. This information will help us to better understand where properties do not comply with existing code and how to best implement the enforcement section of a new ordinance.

Water well test –We now have water well testing data from the health Department for 215 properties for Gerrish and Lyon Township. (Some properties have multiple tests on file).

Be Well Wise – The HLF’s project is going well. They had to order additional test kits having run out a couple of times. (Personally, I had my wells tested through the program. It is easy to do and only takes about 15 minutes. ...both of my tests came back well within the limits.).

New Map – The Steering Committee reviewed and approved the project to prepare a Demonstration Map for Sovereign Park area. After an initial conversation with the Higgins Lake Foundation, it was determined that this is the type of project that fits well with their mission. It was suggested that I prepare a grant application for the project and submit it to their Board for action. Catherine and I have since prepared the application and submitted it online. The HLF Board meets on Aug 11 and will decide at that time. I have attached a copy of the grant application and narrative for your information.

Assuming approval, Fleis will begin work immediately and we should have a final drawing by the end of the year. The preliminary Scope of Work is also attached.

This map is intended to be the first of several to help tell the story of groundwater and effect of on-site septic around the lake going forward.

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. The database has been updated, and a new density map has been prepared. (Ed will make it available.) We also have a new EXCEL output from the database if anyone is interested in doing their own ‘what if’ scenarios. A significant change in the database has been made. Initially we created a scoring methodology that looked at many factors. Some factors were empirical but others were subjective. While this did give us a good analysis of the effect an individual property has on the lake and our public health, the results seemed as though they were not treating all parcels equally. We may find it necessary to revisit this approach at some point in the future.

However, for now, we have simplified the evaluation of each property and evaluated each by four criteria. Those criteria are:

- a) is there any information on file with the HD;
- b) is there a recognized septic inspection,
- c) is there any well information on file with Wellogic/EGLE,
- d) is there a water test on file with the Health Department.

With these criteria as a guide, each property will receive a rating of 1-4. This rating can then be used to notify individuals of their level of compliance with the data gathering portion of the eventual septic ordinance.

Testing - The Septic and Groundwater Committee is now looking at the volume of testing that has been done around the lake over the years. Tests have been done by many different organizations and groups, testing various items. There is no single place to look for information on what, when, why, or who did these tests. We have started the basis of a “matrix” to capture all testing. The matrix won’t necessarily have the results of the

testing but more-so a catalogue of what has been done and where to find the data. Once the initial matrix is done, its data and the actual findings of the testing will be entered into a SQL database similar to our septic tracing database.

Ethan Brand has provided an initial list of tests that have been done or will need to be done. We will use this, among other things, as a “key” to the various types of testing. Ostling is working on the EXCEL version of the matrix and will then work with Ed to determine the best way to get the info into a database. Melanie has weighed in on this work to keep us focused.

Celebration of Higgins Lake – The Communications Committee has been planning for the Celebration of Higgins Lake & beyond 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 -Summer is extremely busy time here in Gerrish and people are enjoying their property and the Lake – after all, that is one of the biggest reasons to live here.

Our work continues and I appreciate all the time that people devote to the HOHL. Meetings – just for the sake of meetings – are not necessary. Online communication, as needed, will continue and I fully expect that after Labor Day there may be a change.