THE HEALTH OF HIGGINS LAKE

PROTECTING OUR WATERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

COMMITTEE REFLECTIONS

NOVEMBER 2026

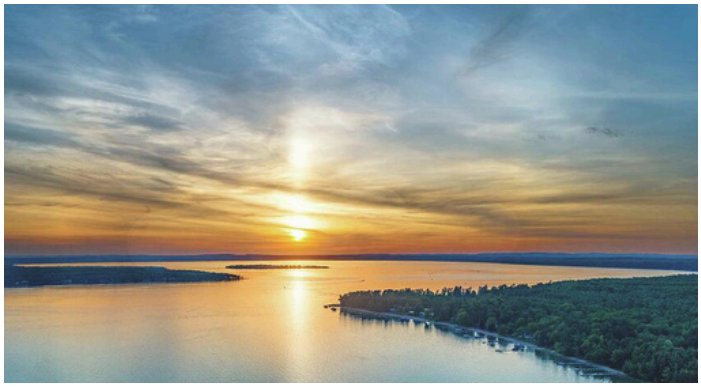
EXPLORING EVERY IMPACT **EMPOWERING EVERY VOICE**

ENSURING A HEALTHIER HIGGINS LAKE



STEERING

- Several HOHL iniatives are creating a more complete picture of how water - and potentially pollutants - move through the watershed.
- Huron Pines is scheduled to present at the November 17 Steering Committee meeting as work continues to update the Higgins Lake Watershed Management Plan.
- The Road Ends project will provide an update on how surface water moves across the landscape toward the lake.
- Together, mapping, well records, and planned testing are strengthening our understanding of potential threats to Higgins Lake and helping guide future research and investigation.



COMMUNICATIONS

- A full-page HOHL informational flyer has been prepared for Gerrish Township's winter tax mailing. It highlights the Watershed Information Map, Celebrating Higgins Lake and Beyond event, and EGLE grant.
- The flyer also invites residents to participate in developing the Higgins Lake Watershed Management Plan.
- Communications continues to collaborate on the Watershed Information Map and share updates through the HOHL website, Facebook, Instagram, Ripple Effect and Committee Reflections.

INFO/TECHNOLOGY

- The Higgins Lake Watershed Information Map Version 2.1 was released in early November, with easier navigation, clearer legends, improved parcel information and new research tools.
- Road Ends: Using LiDAR elevation data, the team mapped 80 of 86 identified road ends and modeled potential drainage patterns. These may help identify runoff pathways for sediment and pollutants; field verification is needed.
- Groundwater and Geology: Review of 3,751 wells and more than 16,600 geological records is strengthening understanding of groundwater conditions beneath the watershed.
- Work continues on lake-bottom contours, research tools and technology infrastructure for future watershed projects.



SCIENCE

- Continues its comprehensive review of factors affecting Higgins Lake's health, bringing together research and findings to guide future lake-protection efforts.
- Two subcommittee final reports are expected in December or January. These reports will help build a stronger scientific foundation for future decisions.
- The Fertilizer Committee is undergoing reorganization as part of the Science Committee's work.



SEPTIC & GROUND WATER

- Septic Ordinance: The Gerrish Township Planning Commission continues developing an ordinance with HOHL input. The committee advocates a comprehensive inventory of existing systems, followed by steps to identify and correct problems.
- Sovereign Park Demonstration Map: The first of several planned maps will improve understanding of groundwater conditions and possible impacts of on-site septic systems around Higgins Lake.
- Groundwater Testing: The committee is developing a nearshore testing strategy for Sovereign Park and potentially other sites. Proposed testing includes E. coli, phosphorus and human-associated microbial markers that can indicate human-waste contamination.
- Collaboration with Michigan State University researchers is being explored to help design an effective testing program and identify where further investigation is warranted.
- The EGLE grant agreement has been executed. Work is underway on staffing, equipment and other project resources.

Health of Higgins Lake



Across HOHL, research, mapping and community engagement are building the knowledge and partnerships needed to protect Higgins Lake.

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