

From: [James Deamud](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Cc: [Nancy Popa](#); [James Deamud](#)
Subject: Lake Leelanau Preservation Board - Lake Improvement Board
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 1:37:38 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

I am requesting that the comments below be presented as part of the Public Comment at the Executive Board Session of the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners presently scheduled for May 11, 2021 at 9:00am. Thank you for your attention to this request.

_____ For Public
Comment_____

My name is Jim Deamud and I have been Chairman of the Houghton Lake Improvement Board since its formation in 2001 to the present. Houghton Lake is approximately 10 miles north to south, and about 5¹/₂ miles at it widest point with approximately 30 miles of total shoreline and covering 20,044 acres. The lake is situated in 4 townships in southwest Roscommon County and is the largest inland lake in Michigan. In 2000, the invasive weed, known as Eurasian Water Milfoil, was identified in the lake and weed beds around the lake were crowning above the lake level. Throughout the year it increased in area until almost half the lake was covered. The weed beds “trapped” numerous boats as they tried to navigate the lake. Further, lake front owners were faced with vegetation that had broken off and floated ashore, collecting in dense windrows along their lake fronts that were very difficult (closer to impossible) to remove by hand raking. The lakefront owners were then forced to hire heavy equipment to remove them at considerable cost.

In 2000-2001 it was determined that we needed to form a Lake Improvement Board and the townships boards joined together to form the Houghton Lake Improvement Board. The Board worked with the township assessors to create a multi-tiered assessment district to generate funds to treat the lake. The owners were relieved when the costs of the assessment was far less than they had been paying for removal.

Initially our assessment district generated about \$1M per year with the first treatment estimated to cost \$2M. The supplier agreed to provide the chemicals and to accept payment in two installments over 2 years. The treatment was done in 2001 and was very successful. Since then, we have undertaken annual vegetation surveys and located the EWM beds which are then spot treated. It is apparent that EWM will never be completely eradicated from the lake, but it is controlled such that it is no longer a danger to boating and other lake activities. Our vegetation diversity is good and the fishery is unaffected by the treatments. We almost lost our lake to the milfoil, but now have a healthy lake that everyone can enjoy.

As a parting thought, the statute controlling the Lake Improvement Board allows two ways to form the board: 1) By petitions signed by lakefront owners or 2) by Board

action. We chose the latter which was the most efficient way to address a rapidly deteriorating situation. I believe that was the better choice and it allowed us to bring the infestation under control. Our township Boards decided early on that it was better to keep politics out of the decision making of the Improvement Board, so we have had very few public officials appointed to the Improvement Board, and our Board is basically autonomous when decisions are being made.

Thank you for your time and attention, and we wish you well in bringing the problems now being faced in Lake Leelanau under control. Like I said above, we came close to losing our lake and hope that doesn't happen to you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Deamud".

James R. Deamud, Chairman
Houghton Lake Improvement Board
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