

Addressing The Threat to Lake Leelanau

Board of Commissioners

Leelanau County

May 11, 2021



Our Community
Is Presented
with a Major
Economic
and
Environmental
Threat to Lake
Leelanau

- We would like to:
 - Summarize the Problem
 - Update You
 - Ask For Your Support
 - Answer Your Questions

A Reminder: Who We Are

Tom Hiatt, President, Lake Leelanau Lake Association

- Lives on North Lake Leelanau

Nancy Popa, Board Member, LLLA

- Former Environmental Professional; Past President, Leelanau Christian Neighbors
- Lives on South Lake Leelanau

Brian Price, Lake Biologist, LLLA

- Coordinating response to threat
- Former Executive Director, Leelanau Conservancy
- Grew up on South Lake Leelanau

Steve Martineau, LLLA Committee Member, Attorney

- Board member and former Board Chair, Leelanau Conservancy
- Lives on North Lake Leelanau

Review

- In April we asked you to consider a resolution to create an independent lake board to protect Lake Leelanau.
- A lake board is needed to address a severe threat to the lake's ecology and the County's economy: Eurasian watermilfoil
- With 11 public boat launch sites and no boat cleaning stations, Lake Leelanau is especially vulnerable to invasive species.
- Left unchecked, experts agree this weed will spread throughout the Lake, first infesting shallower areas like the shoreline, the Narrows, Cedar and Leland Rivers.

Review

- There is no debate among experts about the immediacy and severity of this threat.
- The problem is too big and too expensive for a small nonprofit organization to handle. The County has many other demands on its time, expertise and resources.
- A lake board—which gives the local lake community the authority, resources and flexibility to manage a local problem—is the best solution.

Update

Following our discussion with you on April 13:

- ✓ Talked with each Commissioner personally
- ✓ Touched base with each of six townships
- ✓ Initiated a public discussion

The result: More than ninety-five percent of community members who have contacted us support the formation of an independent lake board. The township representatives we spoke with want the County to act on this matter.

Summary

- Lake Leelanau is a huge economic asset. It generates significant streams of revenue both to local businesses and to the County in taxes.
- An entity of some sort needs to be established and given the authority and ability to address the lake's needs.
- More than 100 other lake communities in Michigan have established lake boards. They have been successful. Most assess only lakeside homeowners.

Summary

- The County government does not have the time or resources to manage the many details relating to the care and long-term protection of Lake Leelanau.
- The proposed lake board would have a representative from the County and each of the six townships. The County's representative can address any concern the County may have.
- Tim Perrone, the County's attorney, has confirmed that a lake board cannot require the County to finance its operations.

We Ask for Your Help

- This problem cannot be kicked down the road. There is no one else in the County who can or will address it.
- If you take no action, the costs and damages will quickly rise.
- We respectfully request that you adopt a resolution to create a lake board and permit the lake community to save our lake.

Questions and Discussion

