

# Lower Long Lake Improvement Board 2025 Annual Summary

Dear Lower Long Lake Property Owner,

My name is Mike Vlasic. I am the current homeowner representative on the Lower Long Lake – Lake Improvement Board. I am writing this letter to *provide background information regarding the annual weed harvests and water quality testing that occur on the lake.*

## Water Quality Testing

The water quality in Lower Long Lake has been monitored for many years, giving us excellent data. The Current water quality monitoring contractor is: LakePro and their summary is: “Lower Long Lake’s water quality is very good.” For the complete report you can go to the Bloomfield Township website: [www.bloomfieldtwp.org](http://www.bloomfieldtwp.org) and search Lower Long Lake or go to the Island, Lower Long and Forest Lake Property Owners Association site: <https://www.ilfpoa.com/>

## What Causes the Weed Problem

There are many types of naturally occurring weeds in Lower Long Lake, primarily in the shallow areas. This is the case with every lake of its type, including our neighboring lakes of Forest, Island and Upper Long. There are three forces at work that make the weeds “a problem” vs. just part of nature. *First, the lake, like all of its neighboring lakes is undergoing a long-term process known as eutrophication.* Basically, the lake is progressing along a natural path of becoming dry land in the shallow areas. First the weeds grow and then die. Over time the build up of dead weeds at the bottom in the shallow areas makes them shallower and provides a source of nutrients (from the decaying weed material), which accelerates the process. When the area gets shallow enough wetland plants begin to take over (like cattails). If this process goes on long enough the shallow area eventually becomes a meadow dominated by wetland plants, and finally a dry meadow. I want to emphasize that this is a long-term natural evolution. We cannot prevent it (short of by dredging) but we can slow it down. *The second force is the invasion of the lake by non-native weeds that grow much faster than our native weeds.* This again accelerates the filling in of the shallow areas with weeds. *Finally, we ourselves make the problem worse if we fertilize, or hire someone to fertilize our lawns, shrubs or trees.* This fertilizer, washes into the lake when it rains and fertilizes the lake weeds just like it fertilizes your lawn, and makes the weeds grow faster. Now we cannot stop the growth of the weeds or the eutrophication of the lake, short of dredging, which has a myriad of environmental impacts. The best we can do is to slow down the process. **The first method we should use is to minimize, if not eliminate, the use of fertilizers on our properties.** If you choose to fertilize there are fertilizers without phosphorus that do less damage, and a buffer area between the fertilized lawn and the lake helps too. **The second method is to harvest the weeds.**

## Reasons for Weed Harvesting

Once we have concluded to control the weeds and slow down the process of eutrophication there are two basic choices: weed harvesting and chemical control. **Weed harvesting is the preferred method for several important reasons.** *First, chemicals that kill the weeds only solve a short-term problem while making our long-term problem even worse.* When the chemicals kill the weeds, the dead weeds sink to the bottom, adding to that source of nutrients that feeds future weed growth. To illustrate the magnitude of this benefit, **every year several hundred tons of weeds are removed permanently from the lake.** *Second, our best defense against invasive non-native weeds is the native weed cover that many of the shallower parts of the lake already*

have. They are the native slow growing weeds that cover certain portions of the lake block out the establishment of the non-native fast growing invasive weeds. Chemicals kill the weeds indiscriminately for the most part, removing the good with the bad, and leaving many areas open to an infestation of a much more problematic weed. *Third, the chemicals adversely affect all of the other living things in the lake* (fish, turtles, invertebrates) that contribute to the long-term health of the lake ecosystem as a whole and give so much enjoyment to the wildlife watchers among us. Finally, the chemicals used to kill weeds create issues for swimmers as well.

## Current System

Our current system is that there is a multi-year contract signed for annual weed harvesting. This is paid for by an annual special assessment for weed harvesting that is managed by Bloomfield Township on our behalf. When the assessment is changed there is a public meeting to discuss it. There was such a meeting in March 2025 to determine the assessment for 2025-2028.

*There are currently three harvests each season. This was requested by the Property Owners Association in 2003, in response to low water levels and relatively high early spring temperatures that resulted in several years of serious weed growth problems in May. Our harvesting contractor for 2025 is Oakland Harvesters. We work with the contractor to achieve an acceptable schedule, given the contractor's constraints about equipment moving, other lakes' requirements and weather. In 2017, at the suggestions of a homeowner, we added mapping of the lake and the weeds pre-harvest. Before each harvest our mapping contractor, LakePro, will map the bottom of the lake and identify weed locations to be harvested. We use this map post-harvest to determine whether the contractor has harvested the weeds successfully.*

The Approximate 2025 Harvest Dates , subject to weather and water conditions are:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| FIRST HARVEST  | JUNE 5 <sup>th</sup> THROUGH JUNE 9 <sup>th</sup>         |
| SECOND HARVEST | JULY 17 <sup>th</sup> THROUGH JULY 21 <sup>st</sup>       |
| THIRD HARVEST  | AUGUST 28 <sup>th</sup> THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1 <sup>st</sup> |

Prior to each harvest, please:

- Have a marker **at the deep-water end** of any sprinkler intakes pipes, hoses or filters
- **Mark the boundaries** of any artificially created sand bottom areas that might be damaged by mechanical harvesting equipment or the current caused by their use.
- **Remove any tree limbs** or other debris that may have fallen in the lake from your property that may obstruct access to the shallow water areas to be harvested
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To reduce the risk of damage, the harvester is not obligated to harvest any closer than five feet from any dock, raft, docked boat, platform, overhanging vegetation or other obstruction. The harvesters do not operate in water shallower than 24”.

If you believe any damage has been done to your property by the harvesting operation please report this **as soon as possible** to the harvester: Oakland Harvesters at [oaklandharvesters@gmail.com](mailto:oaklandharvesters@gmail.com). Our contract provides that the harvester will have a reasonable time to make any necessary repairs. The contractor may not be responsible for repairs not reported in a timely manner.

**If you have concerns about the harvesting operation, including if an area is not being harvested appropriately please contact Ty via text at 248 767-7822.**

## Weed Harvest Plan

Our plan for the harvest has several key points, *first focus on the shorefront to allow boat access from docks to the center of the lake as well as a path to circumnavigate the lake as much as possible. It is not our goal to harvest the shallow water beachfront of individual homeowners.* In most cases the harvester will not come closer to shore than the end of your dock. **It is also not our goal to harvest all of the weeds in all of the shallow areas of the lake for several reasons.** First, we do not have enough money to accomplish that. Second, we need to leave areas of native, slow growing weeds to give us protection against an invasion of faster growing weeds as discussed above. Third the aquatic life in the lake uses the weedy areas to breed and live. Finally, some of these areas are just too shallow for any harvesting machinery to operate in.

Finally, some people wonder why we harvest weeds after the boating season has ended, in September. This final harvest removes as many weeds as possible from the lake before they die off with colder temperatures. This accomplishes two things: first, it reduces the amount of dead weeds in the bottom of the lake and, sometimes, it retards the early weed growth the following spring.

## Phragmites

Phragmites is another plant that can become a nuisance around and in our lake. We have started to see phragmites colonize the west end of the lake, both in the shallow water and on land, near the entrance to the canal that connects to Upper Long Lake. In 2020 we completed a comprehensive study of the lake and have a multi-year Management Plan. LakePro is the contractor. There is lots of information on phragmites on line, a good place to start learning more is: [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov). You can expect to see the contractor on the lake treating the Phragmite with herbicide in August-October. Our contractor can treat Phragmites on your property at no cost to you. Please report any Phragmites to me at [mike@mikevlasic.com](mailto:mike@mikevlasic.com)

I know this letter contains a lot of information but there is much more available. I specifically refer you to the Bloomfield Township website for Lower Long Lake:  
<https://www.bloomfieldtwp.org/Government/Services/EES-Department/Environmental-Services/Lake-Board-Information/Lower-Long-Lake-Board.aspx> Also please come to the annual meeting of the Island, Lower Long and Forest Lake Property Owners Association meeting. You can call me at 248 712 6397 or email at [Vlasic.mike@gmail.com](mailto:Vlasic.mike@gmail.com).