

TOWNSHIP OF CHIPPEWA

Mecosta County, Michigan

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TOWNSHIP OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY THRU THURSDAY 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. UNLESS OTHERWISE POSTED

Bryan Roels, Supervisor
Annette Walters, Trustee

Julie L. Austin, Treasurer

Kristin Lytle, Clerk
Debra Zielinski, Trustee

Topic: 2024 Chippewa Lake Weed Control and the Weather

March 27, 2024

In 2023 the weather in central Michigan was unusually warm and dry through most of the summer. The unusual warm, dry conditions brought on new challenges regarding extensive lake weed and algae management.

Chippewa Lake also experienced Rivularia for the first time, Rivularia is a blue/green alga that is particularly obnoxious. A paper getting into more detail was sent out in the January Township Mailing and can also be accessed on the Township's Website. You can also learn more about Rivularia by viewing a video of a meeting with the subject matter expert, Dr. West Bishop, Seapro Corp., PLM and Chippewa Township representatives. The video of this meeting can also be accessed on the Chippewa Township Website at: (https://www.chippewatwp.org/lake_info.asp).

Looking to the 2024 boating season, we will likely see similar challenges. The winter was unseasonably warm, with very little snow. Only a thin layer of ice covered the lake for a short period of time. In addition, there was rarely any snow on the ice which blocks the sun and prevents weed growth during the winter. Weather forecasts for Spring and Summer look to continue to be warmer and dryer than normal much like 2023. As a result, we can expect more challenges with excessive lake weeds and algae growth in the upcoming boating season.

PLM is working on additional preventative measures such as using a nutrient abatement program. Which is designed to reduce the amount of phosphorous released in the lake. Phosphorous is the main source of food for algae. However, we shouldn't only rely on treatments, prevention is a better and more cost-effective way. You can have an impact by:

- Eliminate the use of all lawn fertilizers near the lake, especially any fertilizers containing phosphorous (this is the middle of three numbers listed on the fertilizer bag) and must be (by law) "0" within 500' of a body of water.
- Be mindful when participating in water sport activities. Phosphorous from decomposing plant material is captured and stored in the soil at the bottom of the lake. By accelerating a boat quickly in water depth less than 15' the bottom is churned up and releases the stored phosphorous allowing it to feed algae and lake weeds.
- Do not allow yard waste to enter the lake. Grass clippings and other yard waste decompose and produce phosphorous again feeding the lake weeds and algae.
- Leave a buffer zone between the lake and your yard. Tall grass can capture runoff nutrients from your yard before they enter the lake.

We don't know what the 2024 boating season will bring us. Minor changes in the weather can bring on major changes, good or bad. The Township and PLM in 2024 will again continuously monitor the lake and act on any concerning changes.

If you would like to know more on this subject or have questions, **please attend the annual Chippewa Township Lake Weed Control Meeting at the Chippewa Township Community Building on May 3, at 7:00 pm.** We will be discussing the 2023 treatments and 2024 treatment plans. Please add this meeting to your calendar and join us for this informative meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Bryan at bryan@chippewatwp.org, Julie at Julie@chippewatwp.org, or Kristin at Kristin@Chippewatwp.org or call the office at 231-867-3777.