

## MILFOIL PLANTS LOOKING FORWARD TO SUNSHINE

Everything that we know about Eurasian Water Milfoil suggests the plants have stored up nutrients in the autumn and will be growing rapidly, once the ice clears off Bear Lake. So, are we ready to stop it in its tracks now? No, we would like to be ready, but it won't be that easy! Unfortunately, while progress is being made, our valuable natural resource continues at risk to invasive species.

The Community Council To Control Milfoil (CCCM) is working on its next steps, but treating a lake is serious business. It can only be accomplished with community support for some tough decisions, which could lead to a dedicated funding mechanism and a series of treatment actions over a number of years.

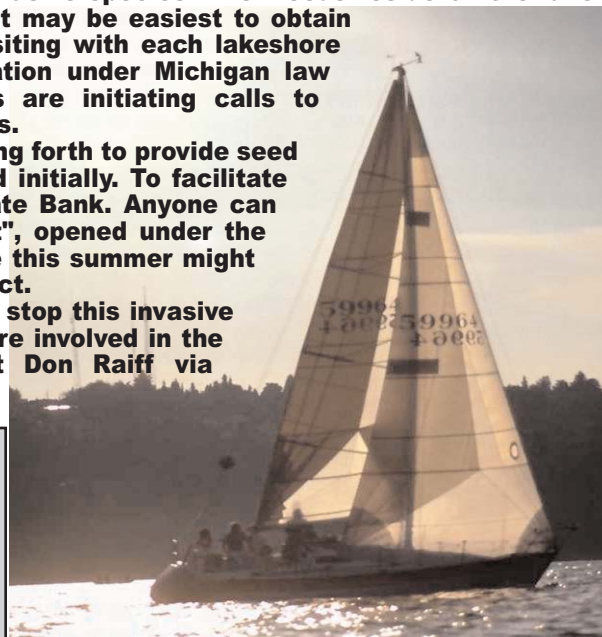
Last autumn, we conferred with two private consulting firms about our next steps, in terms of Treatment Options, Necessary Approvals, Fund Raising and Citizen Education. Currently, we are seeing specific proposals for treatments. However, the options are complex in terms of effectiveness and environmental impact, as well as difficult in their funding requirements. You can expect that CCCM members will be thorough in making decisions about these trade-offs.

Even with unlimited funds, it takes time to gather scientifically-based information in order to agree on treatment actions. Then, we must obtain the permits from government agencies, as well as permission from the owners along the shoreline. Before government permits are obtained, an Aquatic Vegetation Survey needed to be completed in accordance with DEQ standards. Such, a study was authorized last fall and we are awaiting the final results.

Interestingly, while the water in Bear Lake is under the purview of State government; we are told that shoreline owners must be consulted in certain treatment for invasive species. The weeds reside on the lake bed, which is "owned" by the Riparians surrounding the lake. It may be easiest to obtain support for some form of special assessment district, than visiting with each lakeshore owner. Formulating the best way to set up such an organization under Michigan law continues to receive our focused attention. CCCM members are initiating calls to residents of other Michigan lakes to learn from their experiences.

While a number of our local organizations are generously coming forth to provide seed money for our Community Council, more monies will be needed initially. To facilitate local contributions, an account has been created at Honor State Bank. Anyone can stop by to make a contribution to the "milfoil savings account", opened under the auspices of the Bear Lake Property Owners Association. Maybe this summer might provide other opportunities for all residents to support the project.

In short, progress is being made, but not fast enough to stop this invasive species in its tracks, now! If any resident wants to become more involved in the activities to control Eurasian Water Milfoil, please contact Don Raiff via [info@BearlakePOA.org](mailto:info@BearlakePOA.org)



### ~ SOIL TESTING ~

Now is a good time to have your soil tested. This service is available at the Manistee County MSU Extension. The box and form needed to submit soil to the MSU lab can be purchased at the office at 8840 Chippewa Highway for \$10. The phone is 888-4277; website is [www.msue.msu.edu/manistee](http://www.msue.msu.edu/manistee)



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## POSTAL PATRON

SUPPORT BEAR LAKE'S BUSINESSES, SERVICE PROVIDERS AND FARMERS. WE NEED THEM, AND THEY APPRECIATE OUR PATRONAGE.



# BEAR LAKE BULLETIN

**News of the Community  
by the Community**

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## INTERDEPENDENCE NEEDED FOR GROWTH

*Submitted by Rick Farfsing, President Vision Bear Lake*

Vision Bear Lake has indeed remained active over the past few months. It has supported the MSU Small Town Design Initiative (STDI) and the Multi Jurisdictional Comprehensive Master Plan, in addition to writing and receiving a \$4,000 grant from the Manistee County Community Foundation and United Way to help defray the expenses of the three municipalities with the Master Plan.

Both STDI and the Comprehensive Master Plan require similar processes – one that VBL employs: Listening to the people! And as I listen, I hear a recurring theme: *Bear Lake needs a strong and vibrant downtown!*

That thought echoes in my head while I travel through other villages, towns, and cities. Some communities have succeeded; others have not. What causes success; what causes failure? The more I looked at other communities, the more I was aware of things like attractive downtowns and solid infrastructures. Looking at the storefronts, I observed economic diversification with the basic services being met. But beneath the surface, I sensed an intense loyalty of the populace to “make it work.”

Just last week, I purchased the fantastic 2007 Bear Lake Collector Calendar produced by Digitally LOCO, a recent new business to BL, and was amazed to see both Lake St. (US 31) and Lynn St. (Huntington Bank corner) stacked with store fronts. What happened?

Years ago as a first year teacher, my superintendent admonished me to shop locally. “The taxpayers’ dollars support the school and pay your salary, and they would like to see you shopping with them!” Very wise advice to both a first year teacher ... and to a community.

By demanding a strong and vibrant downtown, we are obligating ourselves to support the efforts of those entrepreneurs. Can we purchase things cheaper in the big box stores? Of course! We can save on milk, deck screws, prescriptions, gas, and gifts. But where does the profit go when we spend our money at big box stores? Does it reward the men and women who work for less money in exchange for providing Bear Lake’s basic needs? Do the big box stores answer the call when local yearbook ads or church fundraisers are knocking? Do big box stores reinvest in our community, enhancing the flow of money locally so that more Bear Lakers get a piece of the pie? And what happens when a local business goes under? Many recall when Bear Lake Foods closed its doors years ago. Suddenly, it was a nuisance to go far from home for that late-night gallon of milk – even though one could save 20 cents.

Our village’s geography is unique. Only a limited number of downtown storefronts exist. Many are in need of improvement. What better motivation than making a few bucks is there to convert eyesores to eye candy! We call that capitalism, and it works better than all the threats and whines that could be mustered.

Show me a community that supports its local merchants, and I daresay you will see few, if any, unused downtown storefronts! Coming full circle, Bear Lake indeed has a right to demand a strong and vibrant downtown. But the demand is the proverbial double-edged sword: *use it or lose it!*

Bear  
Lake Needs  
A Strong and  
Vibrant  
Downtown

### -- ADVERTISERS FOR BLB --

Beginning with the June issue of the Bear Lake Bulletin will be the opportunity for business-card size ads. At no cost to recipients, 2000 copies of The Bulletin are printed quarterly. 1600 are mailed to all residents in the 49614 zip code as well as to all lake property owners who do not live here year round. The rest are distributed throughout the community. Ad fee is \$25 and will help offset the costs of printing and postage. *Contact Vision Bear Lake at PO Box 164 or 864-3696 with your interest in an ad.*