

## 2024 LOON LAKE ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY RESULTS (MAY 15, 2024)

### COMMENTARY and HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 A total of 200 Surveys were mailed to the private Parcel Property Owners on Loon Lake. There are 186 unique Owners (14 Owners have 2 parcels in their name). The mailing addresses were obtained from the Plainfield Township Office.
- 2 A total of 84 Surveys were completed and returned to the Loon Lake Conservancy.
- 3 Of the responding Owners, 84% are in favor of employing an independent 3rd Party Lake Ecology Consultant to create a lake management plan that would be adhered to by the Chemical Application Contractor.
- 4 For the multiple choice question "What is your preference on Loon Lake Aquatic Chemical Application going forward?", 83 Respondents replied as follows:
  - 17% preferred to STOP ALL TREATMENT for 2 YEARS and then REASSESS THE NEED
  - 63% preferred EMPLOYING A 3RD PARTY LAKE ECOLOGY CONSULTANT
  - 20% preferred to CONTINUE WITH TREATMENTS AS IS & RELY ON THE APPLICATION CONTRACTOR TO DETERMINE THE PLAN
- 5 52% of Respondents believe fishing on Loon Lake has DEGRADED.
- 6 63% of Respondents believe the killing of NATIVE vegetation has contributed to an overall decline in the Loon Lake fishery.
- 7 62% of Respondents are in FAVOR of investigating the creation of artificial shallow water fish habitat. The Conservancy will pursue this investigation.
- 8 The Conservancy has conferred with the Michigan DNR and there will be a FISH SURVEY of Loon Lake scheduled in 2025. This will be a good comparison to the last survey which was conducted in 2011.
- 9 QUESTION: One Respondent asked "How often does the Loon Lake Improvement Board (LLIB) meet and do they publish minutes?"  
ANSWER: The Conservancy reached out to the Iosco County Drain Commissioner and the Plainfield Township Supervisor with these questions. The LLIB has met once in the period from 2020 through 2023. Yes, they do publish minutes. Visit the website to view the minutes from 2022.
- 10 QUESTION: Several Respondents asked "What would be the cost for a 3rd Party Lake Ecology Consultant?"  
ANSWER: The Conservancy has received one estimate thus far and the cost would be approximately \$12,500 annually to perform the same type of work currently performed on Long Lake in Plainfield Township. The actual cost per Property Owner (parcel) would be calculated by the Assessor's Office as is done for the current Weed Assessment.
- 11 NOTE: Not all Respondents answered every question. The COMMENTS following several of the questions below were typed VERBATIM from the Respondent's submission. No corrections were made to spelling or grammar.

***Thanks to all those who participated in this Survey!***

#### **FOUNDING MEMBERS**

*Rich Bolterstein*  
*Jim Mortimer*  
*Eric Swies*  
*Joe Swies*

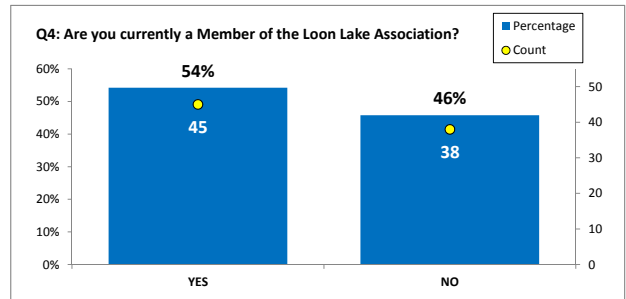
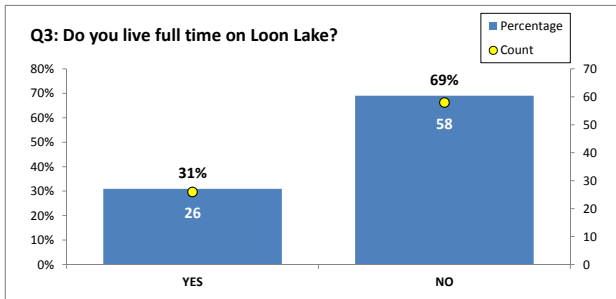
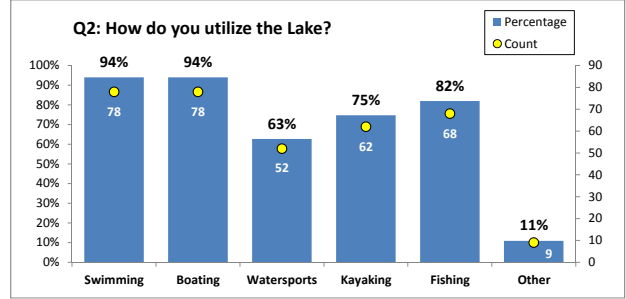
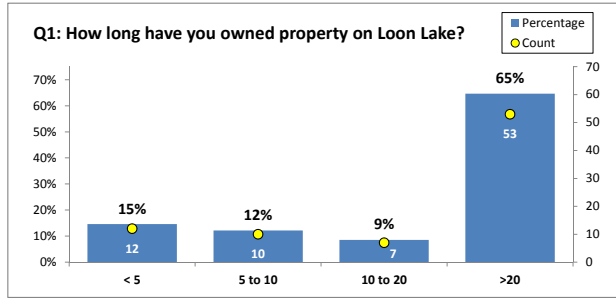


#### **Loon Lake Conservancy**

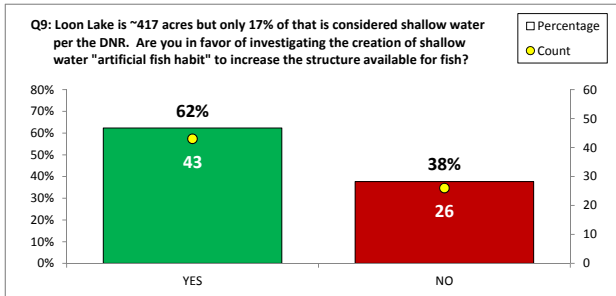
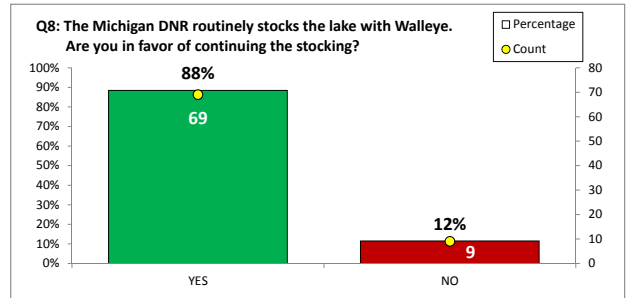
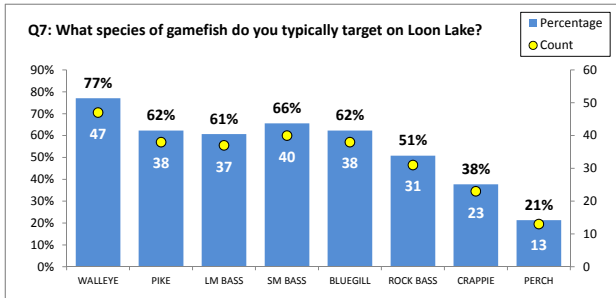
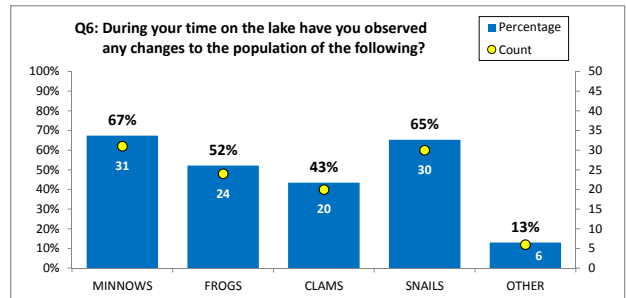
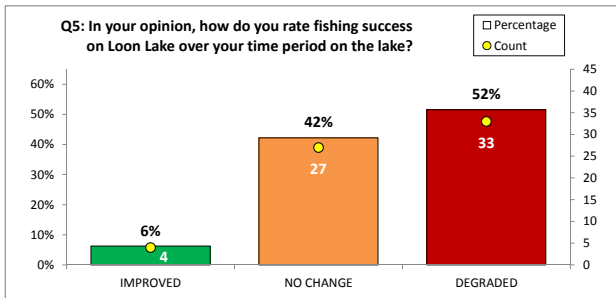
[loonlakeconservancy.org](http://loonlakeconservancy.org)

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PO BOX 837, Hale, MI 48739

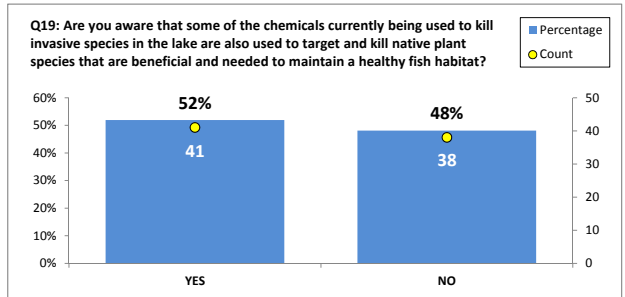
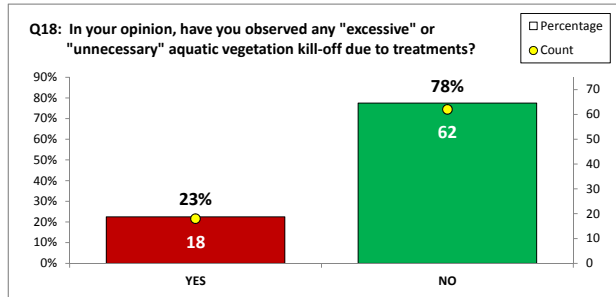
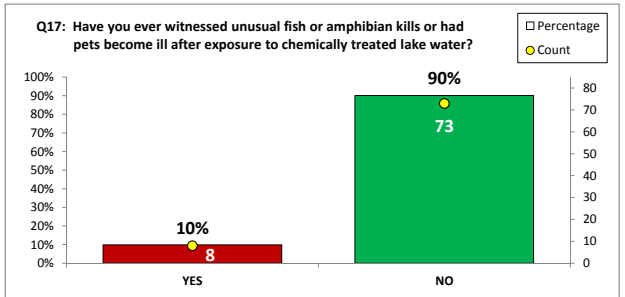
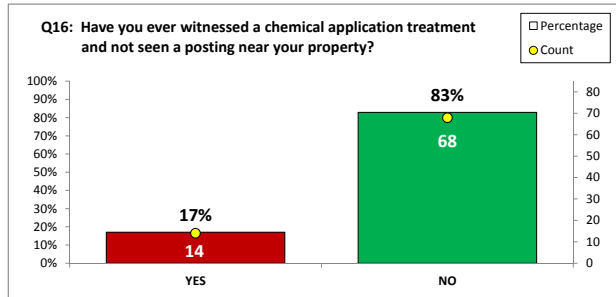
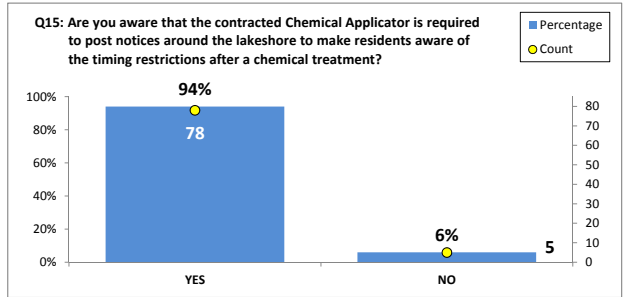
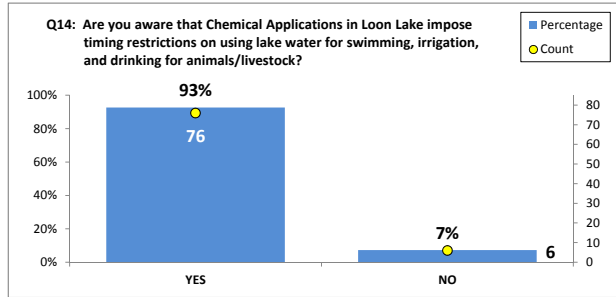
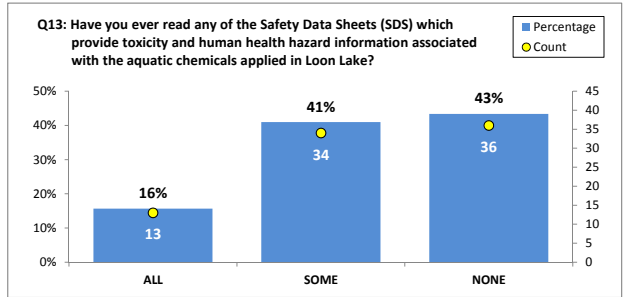
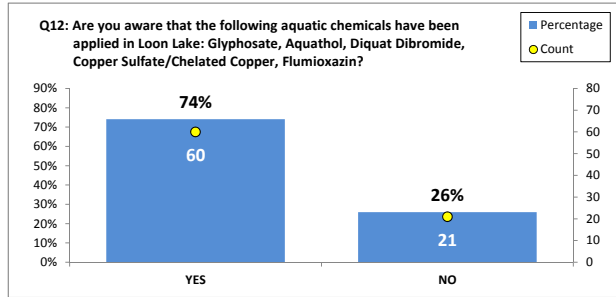
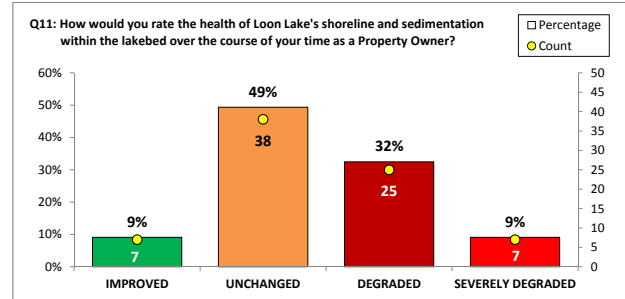
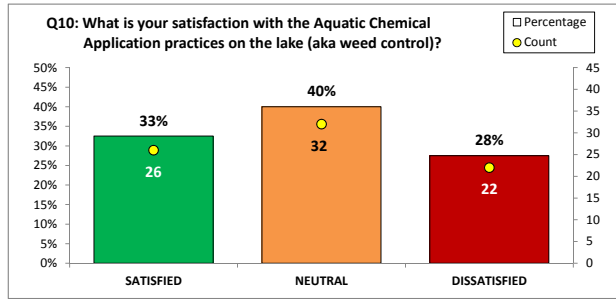
## SECTION A: GENERAL QUESTIONS

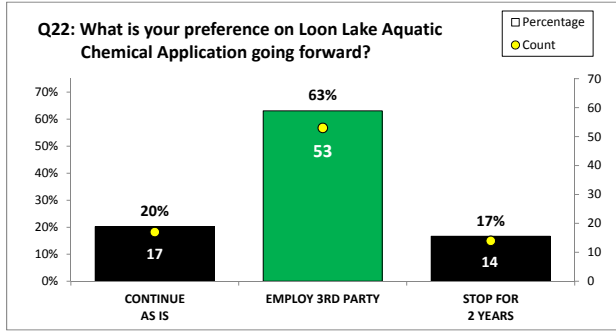
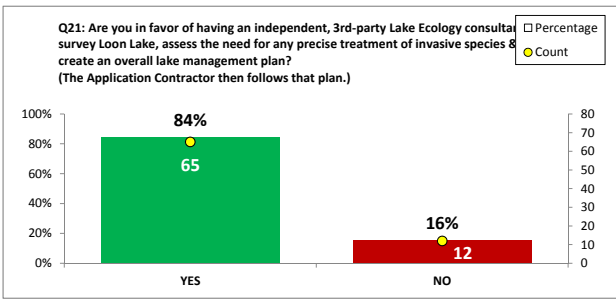
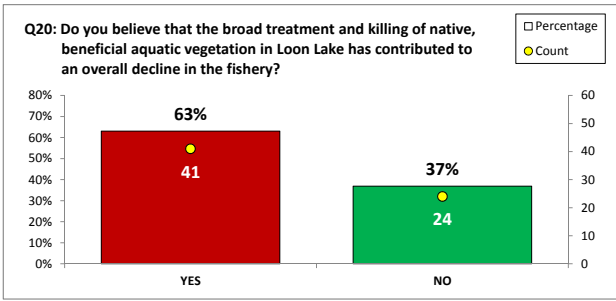


## SECTION B: FISHERY QUESTIONS



**SECTION C: AQUATIC CHEMICAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS**





## COMMENTS

5 *In your opinion, how do you rate fishing success on Loon Lake over your time period on the lake?*

QUESTION 5 COMMENTS	
1	<i>(DEGRADED) Bass and walleye are harder to find as are pike. Perch are stunted. Bait fish disappearing.</i>
2	<i>(DEGRADED) Due to algae blooms</i>
3	<i>(DEGRADED) Following the establishment of the Milfoil weed and subsequent treatment the quality of fishing has declined.</i>
4	<i>(DEGRADED) Largemouth and smallmouth bass populations that existed 10-15 years ago are nearly non-existent.</i>
5	<i>(DEGRADED) Less weed cover - especially in canal area.</i>
6	<i>(DEGRADED) Not as good.</i>
7	<i>(DEGRADED) We used to catch bass and bluegill off my dock. Not seen any there in years.</i>
8	<i>(DEGRADED) There has been an overall reduction of all species catch rate. Bass, perch, crappie, bluegills, pike, and walleye</i>
9	<i>(DEGRADED) Fishing is so bad even Bass Clubs don't fish it anymore. It has become one of the worst lakes in the area.</i>
10	<i>(DEGRADED) Lived on lake for 25 years and used to have good walleye - Now bass &amp; panfish.</i>
11	<i>(DEGRADED) I can't access some of the areas I used to fish as the weed growth has become so thick and heavy you can't fish there.</i>
12	<i>(DEGRADED) Degraded as in I think I will take the canoe to a tiny lake out in the woods where at least I can catch golden shiners and wormy perch!</i>
13	<i>(DEGRADED) Fishing in the lake seems to produce fewer "catches" than 10 years ago.</i>
14	<i>(DEGRADED) Not as many nor as many kinds of fish</i>
15	<i>(DEGRADED) Walleye fishing in particular</i>
16	<i>(NO CHANGE) Fishing is bad. It has been bad the whole time. (Respondent owned property 5-10 years.)</i>
17	<i>(NO CHANGE) It is disappointing. (Respondent has owned property &lt; 5 years.)</i>
18	<i>(NO CHANGE) Fishing has varied over the years in cycles but we have always been successful.</i>
19	<i>(NO CHANGE) Panfish seem smaller and less fish.</i>
20	<i>(NO CHANGE) Fishing is always "slow"</i>
21	<i>(NO CHANGE) Loon Lake has always been a hard lake to fish. There's so many minnows &amp; bait fish. I've been fishing Loon Lake summers &amp; winters for over 60 years.</i>
22	<i>(IMPROVED) I see lots of fish by our dock.</i>
23	<i>New to fishing on Loon Lake.</i>
24	<i>There are not many fish - very sad.</i>
25	<i>My grandchildren have always fished from our dock. They always catch something!</i>
26	<i>Have not lived on lake long enough</i>
27	<i>I purchased the home in 2017 with my ex. He was a fisherman and actually caught walleye. But he left soon after so I can't say how it's changed.</i>
28	<i>Less gamefish in the last 5 years</i>

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*During your time on the lake have you observed any changes to the population of the following?  
MINNOWS, FROGS, CLAMS, SNAILS, OTHER*

QUESTION 6 COMMENTS	
1	<i>We do not see as many (minnows) around the dock at night w/flashlight</i>
2	<i>15 years ago a baited minnow trap tossed off our dock was filled within 1 hour. Now we get nothing!</i>
3	<i>Less of them. (Minnows, frogs, snails)</i>
4	<i>Decreased # (Minnows, clams, snails)</i>
5	<i>All of these populations have decreased. (Minnows, frogs, snails)</i>
6	<i>Less minnows, more snails</i>
7	<i>See a lot of shells that are empty.</i>
8	<i>Seems most have been in decline. (Minnows, frogs, clams)</i>
9	<i>All have declined.</i>
10	<i>All have declined. Also noticed a decrease in Mayfly hatches.</i>
11	<i>A lot of dead shells in shallow areas. (Snails)</i>
12	<i>Boat bottoms almost totally covers. (Snails)</i>
13	<i>Less clams, less minnows, not as many snails last few years, frogs - making a comeback</i>
14	<i>Zebra mussels</i>
15	<i>Plants - less plants</i>
16	<i>Fewer or smaller schools of minnows. Sadly intro of snails. Noticing mostly dead crayfish in our shallows.</i>
17	<i>Don't see any clams anymore -Snails #s are lower</i>
18	<i>Ones I have checked have decreased.</i>
19	<i>Since we purchased in 2014 the fish have been few - sad.</i>
20	<i>Decrease in both (minnows, frogs)</i>
21	<i>What we have is people that don't take care of their property correctly. They fertilize right into the water, etc.</i>
22	<i>Haven't seen any of the above for a very long time. No mudpuppies, crustaceans, insects, bullheads, cisco, crappie.</i>
23	<i>Zebra mussels that used to be everywhere are not present</i>
24	<i>Increases in zebra mussels seems to an issue.</i>
25	<i>Very few minnows, frogs, or clams. An abundance of snails. (Never see schools of minnows anymore)</i>
26	<i>Minnows (down), frogs (down), clams (gone), snails (up)</i>
27	<i>Variations in cycles</i>
28	<i>Less minnows, more snails</i>
29	<i>Less clams and snails. Some crayfish have died after water treatment.</i>
30	<i>More frogs / less minnows / snails always around</i>
31	<i>Very little life at all</i>
32	<i>Populations (of minnows and clams) have greatly decreased in the last 5 years.</i>
33	<i>No changes, the only addition is the zebra mussels.</i>

10	<b>What is your satisfaction with the Aquatic Chemical Application practices on the lake (aka weed control)?</b>
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QUESTION 10 COMMENTS	
1	(DISSATISFIED) <i>I believe the treatment wiped out the fish.</i>
2	(DISSATISFIED) <i>I know we need some weed control but I worry about how it affects the fish, plants, &amp; humans.</i>
3	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Native vegetation is disappearing. Water lilies damaged.</i>
4	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Seems we are targeting all weeds, not just the problem weeds.</i>
5	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Wasted thousands of \$ not needed to be spent!!!</i>
6	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Weeds have increased tremendously. Chemicals are harmful to everyone.</i>
7	(DISSATISFIED) <i>No weed cover in canal area.</i>
8	(DISSATISFIED) <i>We feel chemical application practices are currently excessive, unwarranted, and detrimental to Loon Lake's ecology.</i>
9	(DISSATISFIED) <i>I believe too much weed killer has affected the fishing negatively. Also allowing the weed control to be regulated by <u>the Contractor</u> is a bad idea. They get paid by how much treatment is used. If they want more money, just increase weed killer.</i>
10	(DISSATISFIED) <i>We spray too much. Killed the fishing. The bottom is now one big algae slime covering.</i>
11	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Native weed species have for the most part have been eradicated for all intents &amp; purposes.</i>
12	(DISSATISFIED) <i>I don't know the purpose &amp; if there is a possibility of these chemicals infecting fish we may eat.</i>
13	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Destroying fish habitat on perimeter</i>
14	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Applications seem to be done in a careless fashion &amp; without warning.</i>
15	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Concern for lake environment &amp; fewer fish.</i>
16	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Not needed</i>
17	(DISSATISFIED) <i>Have seen a drastic reduction in the lily pads and other plants native to the lake and continued increase of invasive plants.</i>
18	(NEUTRAL) <i>We have a grandchild that has a rash, itching reaction to chemicals in the lake.</i>
19	(NEUTRAL) <i>Some years weeds are less, others not, it doesn't look like the applications have done anything, but my concern is for humans &amp; our fish after <u>all</u> the chemicals</i>
20	(NEUTRAL) <i>Algae blooms, wild celery are problems.</i>
21	(NEUTRAL) <i>Not sure. This is why the study is being done for more information.</i>
22	(NEUTRAL) <i>We are in favor of what is best for the overall health of the lake water quality &amp; species.</i>
23	(NEUTRAL) <i>I am on the south end of the lake and get lots of dead weeds.</i>
24	(NEUTRAL) <i>I know we need it but am not and "expert" by any means.</i>
25	(NEUTRAL) <i>Applications are frequent. Benefit not clear. Still lots of weeds.</i>
26	(SATISFIED) <i>I wonder if we should have either one more app or a higher use rate because weeds come through late season.</i>
27	(SATISFIED) <i>If you don't spray, the weeds will take over.</i>

28	<i>(SATISFIED) Over the past number of years I believe there has been improvement in the understanding of what the lake/environment needs.</i>
29	<i>(SATISFIED) Weed control has been better. When we 1st got cottage we had to stop &amp; clean boat prop.</i>
30	<i>(SATISFIED) Doing a great job</i>
31	<i>(SATISFIED) PLM has shown growth in vegetation levels in the lake, less cost and have been willing to address issues.</i>
32	<i>(SATISFIED) We are next to a swale which has always been active for spawning but the mouth is closing up with weeds and beaver activity.</i>
33	<i>I feel we need it to some extent to make the lake more usable, yet I do not like having to clean up weeds &amp; slime on my beach.</i>
34	<i>I'm not sure. I want what is best for the lake &amp; fish.</i>
35	<i>When we lived on the lake in the early 2000's we couldn't get our pontoon out into the lake the weeds were so thick. Currently the weeds are under control and only spot treatment is being done.</i>

18	<i>In your opinion, have you observed any "excessive" or "unnecessary" aquatic vegetation kill-off due to treatments?</i>
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QUESTION 18 COMMENTS	
1	<i>Few emergent plants appearing anywhere.</i>
2	<i>Applications do not seem to be targeted.</i>
3	<i>As far as shoreline health, seawalls have had a negative effect on the lake.</i>
4	<i>We would support <u>not</u> applying chemical treatments if they are not absolutely needed.</i>
5	<i>I have noticed weeds get close to surface late season.</i>
6	<i>Perhaps early on when the lake was first treated.</i>
7	<i>Native plant species are specifically targeted by treatments.</i>
8	<i>Continue treatment. We are happy with lake but also investigate ways to help fishing / create fishing areas / shallows.</i>
9	<i>I don't ever remember having to rake the beach as much as we do now but I'm not sure what is "unnecessary" and what "natural occurrence". So much more celery grass also.</i>
10	<i>We filled out another survey, but the Township Supervisor wouldn't use the findings. Instead he get advice or lets <u>the Contractor</u> decide. Must have results from a majority.</i>
11	<i>There has been heavy vegetation floating to shore a couple of times.</i>
12	<i>I am concerned about the water treatment and if they are toxic or if they are really helping. Something seems wrong with the lake in that there doesn't seem to be enough minnow or fish.</i>
13	<i>Only thing I see anymore is native milfoil. Everything else is gone. No weed beds, no nothing. P.S....I've NEVER seen invasive plants in Loon.</i>
14	<i>Seems like there are excessive amounts of seaweed on shore at different parts of the year.</i>
15	<i>These chemicals have been found to cause or lead to cancer &amp; other life threatening diseases in children and adults. Cancer has become prevalent in home owners around our lake. I can't help but think this has contributed to some of our residents' ill health. (Especially in those who are long-time residents.) I hate to think about what we are doing to our grandchildren/children!</i>
16	<i>More noticeable next year when vegetation is gone</i>
17	<i>I would like spot treatments to continue</i>
18	<i>Unnoticed - We are part-timers in the summer - our beach is clear of weeds.</i>



22	<b>What is your preference on Loon Lake Aquatic Chemical Application going forward?</b>
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QUESTION 22 COMMENTS	
1	<i>(Stop Chemical Treatment for 2 years) Reassess with the scientific 3rd Party Lake Ecology Consultant.</i>
2	<i>Minimally, we should interview representatives from several lakes using the two supplier approach as well as the prospective Ecology Consultant. A public interview is best. Share feedback with all.</i>
3	<i>We don't have enough information to make an informed decision. Question 22 is very bias (sp?) on getting true information.</i>
4	<i>I want what is best for the lake and wildlife.</i>
5	<i>The Contractor advising and profiting on treatment of the lake is a conflict of interest. Friends on other lakes served by this contractor have similar concerns.</i>
6	<i>How much will a 3rd party consultant cost?</i>
7	<i>We would support Option b. and/or Option c.</i>
8	<i>If there is evidence of a problem and PLM can't fix it then 3rd party may be needed.</i>
9	<i>Do not stop treating the lake. No one will want to use the lake if it is all weeds. Eagle (sp.) would never let anyone put chemicals in a lake that would harm humans. This is silly.</i>
10	<i>Prefer to stop the chemical treatment PERMANENTLY!!!</i>
11	<i>Anything we can do to improve the fishing like it was in the past.</i>
12	<i>A 3rd party assessment is a good first step. The least amount of treatment the better.</i>
13	<i>What would the cost of a 3rd party consultant be?</i>
14	<i>Balance is key. Nobody wants weeds where they swim, boat. But sustainability is key. Do weed/plant removal w/a mitigation plan or other plan to allow for sandy shorelines.</i>
15	<i>We have been on Loon Lake 40 plus years. At times the weeds have kept us out of the lake. We enjoy fewer weeds.</i>
16	<i>We need to bring back more life to the lake.</i>
17	<i>The underwater forest needs to return for the health of the lake.</i>
18	<i>My answer depends on what the price per lot is (For employing a 3rd party consultant)</i>
19	<i>The canal has several areas I see the fish spawning but I think it's too shallow &amp; could possibly need to be dredged out some.</i>
20	<i>SDS Sheets need to be sent to each residence of the lake and information posted at boat launch sites. Not everyone has access to download or view this information online.</i>
21	<i>If treatment is needed, are there natural alternatives that can be used?</i>
22	<b>EMPLOY 3rd PARTY: (1) Gather information, (2) Create a plan, (3) Implement, then (4) Monitor</b>
23	<i>Still concerned about treating invasive species.</i>
24	<i>The State EGLE rules constrain the treatment levels</i>
25	<i>State requires lower levels if treating invasives where natives are affected. Cumulative vegetation has grown since PLM has treated.</i>
26	<i>REGARDING CHEMICAL APPLICATION POSTINGS: Done day of spray. Would like to have a schedule with approximate date for a heads up. I have seen it started before I had a posting attached to my tree.</i>
27	<i>I would hope that there will be an educated "person" reviewing Loon Lake's plan. I want what is best for our lake.</i>
28	<i>Any study needs a good baseline. With all of the chemicals that are applied every year how is it known what that is? How knowledgeable is the contractor? I would be in favor of bringing in a 3rd party Lake Ecology Consultant but after taking a break period on the chemicals.</i>
29	<i>If the weed treatment is stopped there's going to be some very unhappy property owners. Maybe fishing lessons would be helpful for those who can't catch fish!</i>
30	<i>Keep weed control program as is!!</i>

## OTHER COMMENTS SUBMITTED IN SECTION D (Comments / Concerns)

1	<i>Concerns: What effect does eating the fish that have been living in the chemical water present.</i>
2	<i>The Loon Lake Association offers no value. The only thing I see done with my annual dues is a 4th of July Boat Parade.</i>
3	<i>Interested in joining L.L. Conservancy &amp; willing to pay.</i>
4	<i>Does the LLIB publish meeting minutes? When is the last time they met?</i>
5	<i>Loon Lake used to be a premier fishery. Since the start of weed control it has declined significantly. Besides the fishing being terrible, the slime on the bottom has increased each year. It is so bad now my kids do not want to snorkel and look for objects on the lake bottom. I hope corrective action is taken to restore Loon Lake to its glory days.</i>
6	<i>I would be willing to contribute \$10,000 to fund a 3rd Party Evaluation. I love this lake and hate watching it get killed.</i>
7	<i>I clearly recall what it was like on the lake the summer 20-some years ago when the decision was made to not treat vegetation. I never want to have to manually remove weeds so I can motor my boat away from the dock. That stated, what is done today is the other extreme. No one on the LLIB has the skills and knowledge needed to question PLM's recommendations. Too much is being killed. We need to hire science based experts and follow their lead.</i>
8	<i>We don't know what the Loon Lake Association does.</i>
9	<i>Good survey. Glad you did this. Haven't seen any interest in lake health from the Loon Lake Association in 13 years!</i>
10	<i>We are <u>not</u> crazy about applying chemicals to inland lakes, unless they are absolutely necessary for invasive species.</i>
11	<i>We are not there every year. We trust that the people who live there will want what is best for the lake and its wildlife. That they would put that before personal wants.</i>
12	<i>I use the lake almost daily in the summer &amp; our family use &amp; enjoy for many different purposes. I've never seen anything that is alarming or causes me concerns , but I want it to stay the beautiful lake it's always been for native &amp; humans together.</i>
13	<i>Do not stop treating the lake. We bought on Loon cause it has fewer weeds. The products they treat the lake our (sp.) safe and the poper (sp.) tools for the job. There are times late season weeds get bad. As property owners we should see if we could have chemicals applied we (?) longer residual or another application.</i>
14	<i>Loon Lake Association is a joke. Us people on the canal are not welcome.</i>
15	<i>One respondent not in favor of continued walleye stocking stated: <b>Would prefer bass.</b></i>
16	<i>I would be willing to pay to help the fish stocking program.</i>
17	<i>I'd like the most robust fish population we can get.</i>
18	<i>We would like a weir for maintaining good lake levels. I once helped stocking walleyes. Are they eaten up by pike, etc.? I used to catch walleyes on a regular basis - not now.</i>
19	<i>We lose too much water during the dry seasons. That's why I think we need a weir or lake level system to either drain or keep waters at a reasonable level. Some years we have to pull out our boats early in the late summer or early fall. And we are losing spawning sites in our canal area.</i>
20	<i>We have seen crayfish more often, and we heard they are invasive. We have seen cisco (small adult schools). We don't want jet skis chasing birds. We are concerned about lawn fertilizer entering lake. Seawalls also degrade beach areas as we have witnessed.</i>
21	<i>We are on channel. The sediment is stopping the fish from spawning. While we're at it maybe we should try to manage the lake level.</i>
22	<i>Great survey!</i>
23	<i>Crappie - they're all gone</i>
24	<i>I live on the canal attached to the lake. My neighbor continues to harvest "live" trees off the island which caused more silt to enter our canal. Strictly enforce a "no wake zone" in our canal and stop the illegal taking of undersized fish out of season in our canal.</i>
25	<i>If you stop treating our canal it will be unavailable by July 4th. The silt and weeds from our neighbor who owns the island drives through at half throttle washing the banks down with their wake. Many outsiders fish our canal in the early spring and I have pictures of them taking undersized &amp; out of season fish. I haven't seen the DNR on our lake in "years".</i>

26	<i>Lake Property Owner on LLIB needs to represent anglers as well as others who enjoy the lake. Property Owner survey can make that work.</i>
27	<i>I don't like stapling the paper (chemical application notice) on my cedar tree on the side of a hill / small cliff which I have to remove so I don't have all of the staples left in the tree and the difficult climb. Mail, text, or e-mail the notice as soon as they know the date to be applied. I do think the weed application should continue.</i>
28	<i>I don't like the amount of dead crayfish, clams, and snails.</i>
29	<i>So much muck!</i>
30	<i>We purchased our cottage in 1998. The "weed problem" comes and goes. I see fishermen on the lake every day. It is my understanding that our lake is good for fishing. I hope that any plan(s) being considered will provide a healthy lake for fish and people.</i>
31	<i>I know nothing about LLA. Have never been contacted.</i>
32	<i>REGARDING ARTIFICIAL FISH HABITAT: Would need to learn more about pros &amp; cons</i>
33	<i>I enjoy the beauty</i>
34	<i>I don't believe chemicals can be good for humans or wildlife. But I suspect that these chemicals get into the water supply. I purchase all my kitchen water for cooking or drinking.</i>
35	<i>REGARDING CHEMICAL POSTINGS: I have complained several times because they continuously nail the signs to my same tree. They are killing this one tree. I pulled numerous staples from the tree. I don't want them stapling signs to my tree.</i>
36	<i>I very much disagree with what you're trying to do. My family has fished Loon Lake for over a hundred years. The fishing has always been good but never been an easy lake to fish.</i>
37	<i>We have 26 family members using Loon Lake - including 14 grandchildren - If this overuse of chemicals due to no third party oversight... I suggest the movie "Erin Brockovich" on how devastating "zero" third party oversight can be &amp; hope &amp; pray that is not the case.</i>

## OPINIONS

These opinions were offered freely to the Loon Lake Conservancy. These are observations and comments from professionals and non-professionals. No accusations of improper or illegal activity should be inferred or implied from these statements.

### Long Lake Property Owners

Based on a discussion with Mike [Lesich](#), President of Long Lake Association:

Long Lake Property Owners and the group as a whole have been extremely pleased with the results of hiring [RLS](#) as an independent lake consultant, compared to previously only funding a chemical applicator. [RLS](#) conducts surveys of the water body for nuisance invasive plant species, and creates a management plan for the lake that strictly adheres to chemical application only in areas that are necessary for control. An [RLS](#) employee is in the boat while the application is made, to ensure the plan is adhered to. They have been adamant about keeping Copper [algae](#) out of Long Lake completely. Mike's assessment is that the lake spends approximately the same dollar amount total ([RLS](#) + APPLICATOR) than they were previously spending just on chemicals. Last year, he stated approximately \$50,000 total expenditure.

### Loon Lake Conservancy

### DNR Fisheries Biologist

After a review of a recent weed treatment plan submitted by the Loon Lake Chemical Applicator:

"It is not a surprise that they recommend more treatment..... I disagree with this and their interpretation that the native species are at 'nuisance' levels especially since they don't indicate what cumulative cover level or percentage they consider the threshold for being a 'nuisance'. They noted that the plant community has 'slightly more density' in 2015 than 2014, but they failed to mention that this is a common result of weed treatment. This happens because of the excess nutrients that is now 'free' in the system since there isn't enough vegetation remaining to absorb all of it. The ones that remain will soak it up and experience rapid growth recolonizing the newly exposed sediment/'space' - typically [invasives](#) will do this before the native species can. Excess 'free' nutrients is also why you see more algae growth on treated lakes, like Loon Lake."

*April Simmons*

Fisheries Management Biologist, [MDNR-Fisheries](#) Division



### Long-Time Loon Lake Angler and Lakefront Property Owner

Regarding my time on the lake I have put together some of my fondest memories and thoughts. My family built the cabins on the west side of the lake in the mid-1950s. They were attracted to the lake for its outstanding fishing. The shorelines used to see Bluegills bedding around the entire lake. Palm size gills which were a prize. The pike in the lake grew to Master Angler size, and there is a mounted 20lb fish still on the lake at formerly Paul Maddox place 4 places south of me. It's not like pike of that size were caught every day, but to get pike in the 10lb+ range was not uncommon. The family winter fished for Cisco (Lake Herring) through the ice and I have home movies of them being iced. That was an annual winter event. There used to be schools of perch in the lake that would go as deep and far as you could see. In the summer we always Bullhead fished. It was a blast and good for the kids because we couldn't keep them off the line. Good-sized fish in large quantities. I started specifically targeting bass in the lake in the late 80's. To boat dozens of bass in any given day was normal. I registered a Master Angler smallmouth in 1990's. One of my fondest memories as a youngster was boating into what is now the boat launch and the entire bay being full of bass. It was incredible. Like a pod of salmon building up outside of a river. This phenomenon also occurred with multiple species along the shore in the spring. One of my favorite things in the spring was to glass the shore with my polarized glasses and watch the fish mill around. It was a joy. My brother and his friends from Chicago have been annual visitors to the cabin for the Bass opener for 27 years this May. The decline in fishing has turned the trip into a "memory" lane-type vacation. Where we would boat over 100 bass in a week in 97-98-99, we now may boat 6, if we're lucky. It's disappointing, to say the least. This started with the weed treatments. As fishermen, we saw the decline, and it started with the treatments. Our shallow water weed beds which used to provide critical habitat for bass, pike, walleye, and panfish, have been killed off season after season, and little beneficial cover remains. The beds are ghosts and most go unused. I'm concerned about the hazards to human health these chemicals pose, in addition to what I believe they've done to our fishery. I was not even aware until this season, that swimming is restricted for 1-2 days after application.

*Aaron M.*

### Long-Time Loon Lake Angler from Illinois

Good to see somebody trying to fix this. I've been fishing Loon Lake since 1997. Quite frankly, leading up to my first trip on Memorial day of 97 I heard from Aaron and his brother, Alex, how great the fishing was and I was pretty skeptical. From the first day, it was pretty clear they weren't overstating it. On the first three casts between Aaron and I, we had three bass all over 3 pounds. It took off from there and I've been up fishing Loon Lake for every Memorial Day since, though I can't say I go up for the fishing anymore.

After that first trip in 1997, the next 3-4 years it was not unusual for the three of us to be able to catch and release 100 fish in a combination of bass, walleye and pike every day. We'd fish from early in the morning 6-7:00 am till 10:00 am and then go in until 5-6:00 pm and fish till dark. The 100 estimate wasn't a hard number to do and Aaron had done that for over a decade prior. Considering how far north it is the size of the largemouth bass being anywhere from a pound to six pounds is pretty incredible.....and there were a lot of those bigger three-pound plus fish. It's important to note, we'd keep maybe 4-5 walleye each year for a fish fry but everything else went back.

Then they started weed killing which we found out about from a flyer posted to a tree by the dock and a rather big water boat dumping bags of chemicals overboard. After that, the change in the quality of fishing was immediate. The amount we caught dropped steadily every single year from 2001 on with only a couple of exceptional years sprinkled in with none of those exceptional years coming in the last 10 or 12. Quite honestly, it gets worse every year. Today, if the three of us can go out and each come back with 4-6 bass, walleye or pike in total between the three of us.....that's about the most you can expect. It's pretty sad, really. What was a good of a fishing lake as one could find almost anywhere has been reduced to something quite poor.

Best of luck getting this changed. If it can be restored to even a third of former glory that would be amazing! If I can help in any way let me know.

*Jim C.*