Portage Lake

Lake Management Plan 2014

Prepared for Onekama Township, Portage Lake Watershed Forever & Invasive Species Committee

Submitted By:

BreAnne Grabill, Environmental Scientist

PLM Lake & Land Management Corp.

PO Box 424 · Evart, Michigan 49631
phone 800.382.4434 · fax 231.372.5900
www.plmcorp.net

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Executive Summary

Portage Lake has been managed over the past six years with goals of indentifying and reducing the presence of exotic species throughout the Portage Lake watershed, tracking plant trends, improving water quality readings and protecting Portage Lake into the future. The following report breaks down the specifics of the previous management, the management of the 2014 season and the need for future management.

In 2014, just over 180 acres of EWM, Phragmites, Purple Loosestrife and Japanese knotweed were controlled via chemical control methods. Extensive lake mapping, vegetation mapping and water quality testing was also performed. The vegetation mapping allowed for detailed description of what is occurring within the water column with BioBase mapping technology as well AVAS Survey mapping showing numerous native and non native plants present throughout the lake. The abundance of healthy native plants in Portage Lake increases the long term stability of the lake. While some water quality parameters have maintained themselves with little change over the years, other parameters have shown fluctuations. Some of these fluctuations include showing that the tributaries around Portage Lake are bringing excess nutrients into the lake. This information is vital in determining the areas within Portage Lake that need to be focused on reducing nutrient loading to help reduce the productivity in Portage Lake. The ability of Portage Lake to produce algae and aquatic plants is directly related to the overall health and use of Portage Lake. While the main goal of the management is to protect the long term ecological health of the lake, it is also important to protect the recreational, aesthetical and financial aspects of the lake as well. All of these factors play into the management efforts on Portage Lake which need to be continued into next season.

Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

This management plan documents management activities during 2014, examines current conditions in the lake, and provides management recommendations for 2015. The plan will detail an integrated approach to lake management including but not limited to exotic weed control, water quality monitoring and aquatic vegetation surveying.

Characteristics of the Lake

Portage Lake is a 2165-acre lake located in Onekama Township and the Village of Onekama, Manistee County, Michigan. Public access to the lake is provided by multiple access sties. A large portion of the shoreline has been developed and of that, a majority for single family year-round homes. A formal lake-use survey was not included in this study, but observations made while working on the lake indicate that the lake is used for fishing, boating (power & non-power), and swimming.

Portage Lake makes up 13.6% of the overall Portage Lake Watershed, which drains into Lake Michigan. Numerous other lakes and tributaries flow into Portage Lake, which has a man made channel into Lake Michigan on the west end. Portage Lake is a natural lake with two deep holes approximately 60' deep.

A few problems necessitating management of Portage Lake are: (1) exotic and invasive species, and (2) water quality concerns. The presence of multiple exotic species has required annual management of the aquatic and terrestrial plants within and around Portage Lake.

Establishment of weedy exotic aquatic plants, including Eurasian watermilfoil and curly leaf pondweed, exacerbates problems caused by aquatic vegetation in the lake. These weedy exotic plants grow to the surface and cause substantially more interference with recreation than native plants.

Management Goals for Portage Lake

- The primary goal of management in Portage Lake is to control and manage exotic plants, to allow recreational use of the lake and promote a healthy fishery. The exotic plant species, Eurasian watermilfoil and Phragmites, should be controlled throughout Portage Lake to the maximum extent possible. Native plants should be encouraged throughout the lake to promote an overall heahlty ecosystem. Genetic testing in Portage Lake has found that the Eurasian watermilfoil and Northern watermilfoil species have bred, forming a new genetic strand of milfoil commonly referred to as Hybrid milfoil. In reference to Portage Lake, Eurasian milfoil will be now referring to both EWM and Hyrbid milfoil as it all needs to be managed as an exotic, invasive species.

- Aquatic plant management should preserve species diversity and cover of native plants sufficient to provide habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. Native plants should be managed to encourage the growth of plants that support the Portage Lake fishery (by creating structure and habitat) provided that they do not excessively interfere with recreational uses of the lake (e.g., swimming and fishing) in high-use areas. Where they must be managed, management techniques that reduce the stature of native plants without killing them (e.g., harvesting, contact herbicides) should be used whenever possible. Specific areas should be set aside where native plants will not be managed, to provide habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. Muskgrass (*Chara*) should be allowed to grow throughout the lake, except in where it grows so tall as to interfere with boating and swimming.
- The species Starry stonewort, if found on the Portage Lake should be actively controlled and managed. Starry stonewort is in the same family as Muskgrass (Chara) but is considered to be an exotic invasive species. Starry stonewort, which looks very similar to the beneficial species Chara, is appearing in more and more lakes. Chara is a highly desired plant because it is typically low growing, keeps the water clear and can slow down the invasion of exotic weed species. Starry stonewort also forms dense mats, but unlike chara, it can grow from 5 to 7 feet tall. Starry stonewort can be very detrimental to a lake's ecosystem and has the ability to kill off native plants and have a negative impact on a lake's fisheries.

Starry stonewort

- The aquatic invasive terrestrial plants, Purple loosestrife and Phragmities should be controlled along the shoreline and adjacent wetlands where present. Both species are exotic and have the ability to displace beneficial native vegetation. Purple loosestrife grows 2 -4 feet tall and is a vibrant magenta color. It is very aggressive and can quickly become the dominant wetland vegetaion. Phragmites (common reed) is a wetland grass that ranges in height from 6 to 15 feet tall. "Phrag" quickly becomes the dominant feature in aquatic ecosystems, aggressively invading shorelines, wetlands, and ditches. This plant creates dense

Phragmites

"strands" - walls of weeds crowding out beneficial native wetland vegetation and indigenous waterfowl habitats. Spreading by fragmentation and an extensive root system, Phragmites ultimately out-competes native plant life for sun, water and nutrients.

- The terrestrial invasive plant, Japanese knotweed should be controlled throughout the Portage Lake Watershed. Japanese knotweed is a large, herbaceous perennial plant native to Eastern Asia. In North America the species has been classified as an invasive species. Japanese knotweed has hollow stems with distinct raised nodes that give it the appearance of bamboo, though it is not closely related. Reaching a maximum height of about 12' each growing season, it is typical to see much smaller plants in places where they sprout through cracks in the pavement or are repeatedly cut down. The invasive root system and strong growth can damage concrete foundations, buildings, roads, paving, retaining walls and architectural sites. It can also reduce the capacity of channels to carry water. It forms thick, dense colonies that completely crowd out any other herbaceous species. The success of the species has been partially attributed to its tolerance of a very wide range of soil types, pH and salinity. The plant is also resilient to cutting, vigorously resprouting from the roots. The most effective method of control is by herbicide application close to the flowering stage in late summer or autumn.

- Water quality efforts in Portage Lake should continue to be made to reduce external loading of nutrients. Proper watershed management techniques should be applied where possible and lake residents should be encouraged to practice "lake friendly" lawn maintenance.
- Outreach/education of the Portage Lake residents should continue in an attempt to communicate lake activities and management goals. The Portage Lake website should be maintained as a way to directly relay pertinent information along with annual meetings and newsletters.

Strategies for Achieving Lake Management Goals

Aquatic Plant Control Techniques

Areas of the lake that support vegetation will grow plants, despite intense efforts to remove them. Aquatic vegetation provides important benefits to a lake, including stabilizing sediments, providing habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms, and slowing the spread of exotic plant species. In general, native plants interfere less with recreation and other human activities than exotic species. The non-native plant species, Eurasian watermilfoil and curly leaf pondweed concentrate their biomass at the water surface where it strongly interferes with boating, swimming and other human activities. This growth form also allows exotic plants to displace native plants and form a monospecific (i.e., single species) plant community. The dense surface canopies of Eurasian watermilfoil and Curly leaf pondweed provide a lower quality habitat than that provided by a diverse community of native plants. Control of exotic plant species minimizes interference of plant growth with human activities and protects the native vegetation of the lake. The goal of environmentally responsible aquatic plant management, therefore, is not to remove all vegetation, but to control the types of plants that grow in the lake and the height of plants, to minimize interference with human activities.

It is important that control techniques meet the needs and expectations of lake users. Each technique has advantages and disadvantages. Many aquatic plants are relatively susceptible to some control measures but resistant to others. Too often, lake groups select a control technique before determining what their needs are.

Chemical control, or use of aquatic herbicides, is the most common strategy for controlling exotic plant species. Aquatic herbicides provide predictable results and there is a great deal of research and data regarding theses products. Many of the aquatic herbicides available can be used to selectively control exotic species with minimal or no impact on native species.

Mechanical harvesting is best suited for native plant species. Most native plant species have a higher tolerance to aquatic herbicides and require higher dosage rates (higher cost and reduced selectivity). Mechanical harvesting can be used to provide relief from native plant species if they are causing a recreational nuisance. Harvesting does not kill the plants, but simply reduces it's stature, leaving lower growth for fish habitat and sedimnet stabilization. Mechanical harvesting of Eurasain watermilfoil is not recommended as it will expedite its spread throughout a lake through fragmentation.

Biological control options for nuisance aquatic vegetation are limited. Grass carp, which indiscriminately devour aquatic vegetation, have been restricted in many states because of their nonselective grazing and fear they may escape into nonintended waters. The use of the milfoil weevil (Euhrychipsis lecontei) to control Eurasian watermilfoil has been implemented in many Michigan lakes. PLM Lake & Land Management Corp has many years of experience particapating in weevil stocking, evaluations and longterm observations related to their performance and sustainability. Although the milfoil weevils may impact EWM populations in certain situations, the use of this tool remains unpredictable.

Bacteria product formulations and application techiques has greatly improved in recent years. Granular bacteria products can be applied to specific shoreline areas to reduce organic muck that has acumulated over the years. As waterbodies age, organic sediment can build up due to excessive plant and algae growth. This process is called eutrohpication. Increasing native populations of bacteria can slow this process down. Reductions in the depth of muck may depend on many variables. Most importantly, the percent of sediment that is organic. The more organics in the sediment, the greater the potential for muck reduction via bacteria augmentation.

Aeration can be a beneficial tool to sustain ecological balance within an aquatic ecosystem. By maintaining sufficient oxygen levels throughout a waterbody, the entire eutrophication process can be slowed down, the health of the fishery can be maintained and overall water quality can be improved. The implementation of an aeration system to control rooted aquatic plant growth is not recommended. Rooted plants, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, will not be affected by aeration. Similar to the use of biological control, the impact of aeration on improving water quality and reducing organic sediment will vary greatly from site to site. Therefore, it is extremely important to thoroughly evaluate each site's conditions and expectations before implementing an aeration system.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approaches to aquatic plant control IPM emphasize spending more effort evaluating the problem, so that exactly the right control can be applied at just the right time to control the pest. IPM approaches minimize treatment costs and the use of chemicals. Lake Management planning ensures the most appropriate, cost-effective treatment for your lake. Planning is an essential phase of Integrated Pest Management and includes lake vegetation surveys, water quality evaluation and a detailed, written lake management plan. Having the plan in place helps lake users know what to expect from lake management. Survey results provide a permanent record of conditions in the lake and the impact of management practices.

Exotic Plant Management

Aquatic herbicides currently represent the most reliable, effective, selective means for controlling Eurasian watermilfoil. There are currently five systemic herbicides, 2,4-D (Navigate), 2,4-D amine (Sculpin G), triclopyr (Renovate 3 & OTF), 2,4-D/Triclopyr combination (Renovate Max G) and fluridone (Sonar or Avast), which can be used to achieve long-term, selective control of Eurasian watermilfoil. Systemic herbicides are capable of killing the entire plant. Several contact herbicides, including diquat (Reward or Solera) can also provide short-term control of Eurasian watermilfoil. These herbicides kill only the shoots of the plant, and plants regrow relatively rapidly from their unaffected below ground parts.

Systemic herbicides control Eurasian watermilfoil with little or no impact on most native plant species. Under ideal conditions, several consecutive annual applications of these herbicides can reduce Eurasian watermilfoil to maintenance (low) abundance, such that only relatively small spot treatments are required to keep it under control. For this strategy to succeed, it is necessary to treat most of the Eurasian watermilfoil in the lake each time.

Harvesting of Eurasian watermilfoil is **not** recommended. This plant spreads by fragmentation and regrows significantly more rapidly than most native plant species; thus continued harvesting of mixed plant beds typically leads to nearly complete domination of the aquatic vegetation by Eurasian watermilfoil.

Purple loosestrife can be selectively controlled through the use of triclopyr (Renovate). Purple loosestrife is an exotic species, which is out competing native vegetation, destroying valuable wetlands and animal habitat and expanding in density along Portage Lake. In past years our options to manage this nuisance weed has been extremely limited to prevention, manual removal or broad spectrum herbicide treatments, which not only killed the Purple Loosestrife but also the native vegetation remaining in the treatment areas. The biological control effort, beetles, have shown positive control measures and this method is also encouraged to continue into the future.

Phragmites, can be selectively controlled through the use of glyphosate or imazapyr (Habitat) herbicides. Phragmites is an exotic species, which can out compete native vegetation, destroying valuable wetlands and animal habitat.

Native Plant Management

Native plants should be controlled primarily by harvesting if required. Unlike Eurasian watermilfoil, most native plants do not regrow rapidly after harvesting, and a single harvest is often sufficient to control them for the entire summer. Normally low-growing species should not be controlled unless unusually fertile growing conditions allow them to grow tall in areas of high recreational use. Contact herbicides applied at higher rates can be effective at controlling native plants that are causing a nuisance close to shore, in between docks.

Algae Management

Not required at this time.

Monitoring

It is important to maintain a record of lake conditions and management activities. Vegetation surveys monitor types and locations of plants in the lake, providing information that is essential to the administration of efficient, cost-effective control measures. Vegetation surveys also document the success or failure of management actions and the amount of native vegetation being maintained in the lake. Water quality monitoring can identify trends in water quality before conditions deteriorate to the point where remediation is prohibitively expensive or impossible. Records of past conditions and management activities also help to keep management consistent despite changes in the membership of the organization. Records should include (at a minimum):

- Temperature, dissolved oxygen and Secchi disk depth should be measured in the lake at both deep hole basins. Temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles should be obtained in the deep hole, so as to monitor the timing and extent of oxygen depletion in the hypolimnion (i.e., bottom water).
- Total phosphorus and nitrates and ammonia should be measured in the surface and bottom water at least two times per season (spring and late summer) to monitor nutrient accumulation in the hypolimnion.
- Chlorophyll a sampling
- Tributary testing including flow and nutrient sampling
- Lake vegetation should be surveyed on an annual basis (late-spring and/or late summer/early fall) to document the results of plant management efforts and provide information necessary for planning future management.

Nutrient Loading Abatement

Lakeshore property owners should be encouraged to use phosphorus-free fertilizers on lawns and other areas that drain into Portage Lake or the adjacent wetlands. Lakeshore residents should also be encouraged to manage their waterside landscapes according to the recommendations outlined in publications on this topic available from the MSU Extension.

It is also important to remember that rooted plants derive most of their key nutrients from the sediments; thus they respond slowly, if at all, to reductions in nutrient loading. In fact, if reductions in nutrient loading lead to improved water clarity, the growth of rooted plants will probably increase.

If organic material (muck) accumulates to undesirable levels in shoreline areas, bacterial treatments should be considered as a way to alleviate the buildup. PLM MD (Muck Digestion) Pellets are a combination of natural beneficial bacteria, enzymes, and vitamins that stimulate the biological activity of the lake bottom. This stimulation allows the bacteria to feed on the organic sediment, therefore reducing the muck levels over time.

Prevention

Eurasian watermilfoil and curly leaf pondweed were possibly introduced to Portage Lake by plant fragments carried on boats and/or boat trailers. A variety of other troublesome exotic plants and animals that have been introduced to Portage Lake are also transported this way. Preventing their inadvertent introduction to Portage Lake can significantly lower the cost of future lake management. Education can be an effective preventative measure. Newsletter articles should alert lake residents to the threat from exotic nuisance plants and animals. Warning signs should be erected at any public boat access sites, if applicable, that encourage boaters to clean boats and trailers when launching or removing watercraft from the lake.

Lake Management Activities Conducted in 2014

Water Quality

Water quality was evaluated on May 8, June 6, July 23, September 24 and October 1, 2014. The May sampling included Storm Drain and tributary testing. In June, deep hole testing and shoreline testing of Portage Lake occurred. The July testing was for Ecoli. During September, tributaries as well as the deep hole basins were sampled and in October the shoreline areas were sampled. During the deep hole sampling the following occurred, (1) a depth profile of water temperature and dissolved oxygen concentrations were measured at ten feet intervals at both Deep Hole Basins and the Secchi disk depth was measured, (2) samples for LakeCheck™ analysis were collected from the deep holes of the lake (surface, bottom and every 10' between) for numerous parameters, (3) chlorophyll and algal composition analysis was collected from surface, mid thermocline and bottom samples. During the Storm Drain sampling the following occurred at 4 designated drains, (1) Flow testing, (2) surface reading of temperature and dissolved oxygen (3) samples for LakeCheck™ analysis were collected. During the tributary testing, the following occurred at 7 designated tributaries, (1) surface reading for temperature and dissolved oxygen, (2) samples for LakeCheck™ analysis were collected and (3) flow was determined. LakeCheck measures at the various sites included some or all of the following parameters: Conductivity, Total Dissolved Solids, pH, Conductivity, Total Phosphorus, Oxidative Reduction Potential (ORP), Alkalinity, Ammonia, Nitrates and Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen.

Weather Challenges of 2014

The winter of 2013/2014 was extremely cold with an above average snow fall. Most lake experienced great ice coverage than in recent years, leading to a loss of oxygen in many waterbodies. The spring melting of snow and ice was increased with heavy rains, leading to a flushing into the lake from the outside watershed and an increase in lake depth. Increased rainfall can cause a substantial amount of nutrients, debris, sediment and other unknown, potentially harmful, substances into the lake. Each year the weather will causes changes within Portage Lake. Some years it may lower plant production while other years may lead to increase plant growth and elevated water quality numbers. The spring was cool and lead to a cooler than normal start to summer, which caused some plants to get a late start (normally native plants) while exotics had less competition and took off thriving in some lakes. Exotic species tend to benefit from changes in weather conditions.

Eurasian watermilfoil

Aquatic Plant/Algae Control

Weed and algae treatments were conducted in June, July and September to control Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) in Portage Lake and Phragmites, Purple Loosestrife and Japanese knotweed around Portage Lake. The lake was closely monitored this year for any areas of exotic plant growth and treated accordingly.

The management strategy for the control of Eurasian watermilfoil has been working. However, despite our efforts, EWM control is a constant battle that is heightened with hybrid watermilfoil. The presence of Hybrid watermilfoil supports the conclusion that milfoil treatments will continue to be required annually. A reflection of proper/successful management is a good fishery, which has been verified through the terrific fishing reports on the lake. The Phragmites Treatment Program has been very effective. After the initial treatment of 83 acres, the follow up years have required just a small treatment in proportion to the initial application, The below maps and table show a breakdown of the treatments in Portage Lake in 2014, as well as previous years for both EWM and Phragmites/Purple Loosestrife/Japanese knotweed Control.

Map 1: Portage Lake June 2014 Treatment Map

June 6, 2014 EWM Treatment, 1.5 acres Renovate OTF

Map 2: Portage Lake July 2014 Treatment Map

July 29, 2014 EWM Treatment, .8 acres Renovate OTF, 95 acres Renovate Max LZR, 10 acres Sculpin G, 1.25 acres Clipper

Map 3: Portage Lake September 2014 Treatment Map

September 8, 2014 EWM Treatment, 26 acres Renovate Max LZR, 41.5 acres Sculpin G

Map 4: Portage Lake July Vegetation Composition Map 2014 (pre treatment)

Some areas of this map were not surveyed; therefore there is no color present. All areas surveyed are shown in the map with a color. The color indicates the vegetation density present. Blue indicates no vegetation, dark green is low vegetation and as the density increases, the shade of green lightens to light green. As the density continues to increase, the light green turns into yellow and then into orange and finally into red. Red is highest density and the top of the scale. This map show very low densities of aquatic plants at the time of the survey, July 2014.

Map 5: Portage Lake Terrestrial Treatment Map 2014

2014 Terrestrial Treatment, 6.2 acres Phragmites, Purple Loosestrife, Japanese knotweed

Table 1: Submersed Plant Treatment Quantities 2014-2009

		Product	Rate#/Acre	Acres	Total Acres
2014	6-Jun	Renovate OTF	200#	1.5	176.05*
	29-Jul	Renovate OTF	200	.8	
		Renovate Max LZR	120#	95	
		Sculpin G	200#	10	
		Clipper	200ppb	1.25	
	8-Sep	Sculpin G	160#	23	
		Sculpin G	200#	12.5	
		Sculpin G	240#	6	
		Renovate Max LZR	160#	26	
2013	24,27 -Jun	Renovate OTF	160#	5	129.75
		Renovate Max G	160#	39	
		Sculpin G	160#	74.5	
	8-Aug	Sculpin G	160#	10	
		Clipper	200ppb	1.25	
2012	9-Jul	Renovate OTF	120#	10	145
		Renovate Max G	160#	55	
	24-Jul	Renovate OTF	120#	5	
		Renovate Max G	120#	40	
		Sculpin G (2,4-D)	160#	35	
2011	27-Jul	Renovate OTF	120#	22	22
2010	29-Jun	Renovate OTF	120#	5	86
		Navigate 2,4-D	100#	17	
	27-Sep	Renovate OTF	120#	14	
		Navigate 2,4-D	120#	50	
2009	15-Sep	Renovate OTF	120#	~41.5	161.5
		Navigate 2,4-D	100#	120	

*Some Re-Treatment in 2014 due to in-adequate dieback of treatment beds.

Table 2: Terrestrial Treatment Summary (Phragmites, Purple Loosestrife, Japanese knotweed) 2014-2009

Year	Product	Rate	Acres
2014	Glyphosate/Imazapyr	4%	6.2
2013	Glyphosate/Imazapyr	2%	7.9
2012	Glyphosate/Imazapyr	2%	13.5
2011	Glyphosate/Imazapyr	2%	7
2010	Glyphosate/Imazapyr	2%	10
2009	Glyphosate/Imazapyr	2%	83

Planning/Evaluation

Surveys of the aquatic vegetation of the lake were conducted on June 16, July 23, August 6, August 22 and October 1, 2014. Additional surveys of the lake were made frequently throughout the summer months for pre or post treatment evaluation, to collect water quality parameters, as well as to have additional survey data available for management purposes. Vegetation surveys determine the locations of target and non-target plant species. The results of the surveys are used to determine the most appropriate management strategy. The vegetation surveys also document the success of the prescribed management program. An AVAS survey is the State of Michigan's method for conducting a complete aquatic vegetation survey. The Aquatic Vegetation Assessment Site (AVAS) survey divides the parts of the lake capable of growing plants (littoral zone) into subareas and records the cover of each aquatic plant found in each "site". This method of surveying takes into account not only the types of plant species present in the lake but also the densities of those species. AVAS surveys are also an excellent way to track plant species trends over time. A goal of invasive plant management is to have native plants increase while exotic plants decrease over time. The success of this goal can be illustrated through the use of the AVAS data collected over several years. Since different native plants grow at varying times throughout the season it is important to evaluate the lake multiple times to account for *all* species in the lake. The first evaluation is conducted in the spring and is used to determine areas that will require treatment or management. The second survey is conducted in late summer or fall and is used to determine management success.

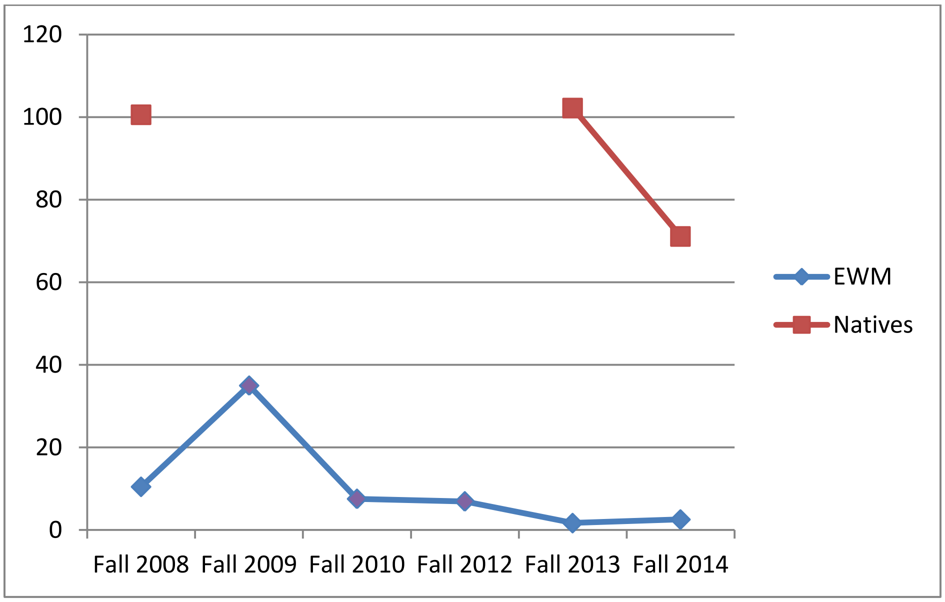
Table 3: Plant Species Found In Portage Lake –2014

AVAS Code	Common Name	Scientific Name	% Cumulative Cover October 2014
	Submerged- Exotic		
1	Eurasian watermilfoil	*Myriophyllum spicatum*	2.57
2	Curlyleaf pondweed	*Potomageton crispus*	0.00
	Submerged- Native		
3	Muskgrass	*Chara*	23.91
4	Thinleaf pondweed	*Potomageton spp.*	0.46
5	Flatstem pondweed	*Potomageton zosteriformis*	0.51
7	Variable leaf pondweed	*Potomageton gramineus*	0.06
8	White stem pondweed	*Potomageton praelongus*	0.22
9	Richardsons pondweed	*Potomageton richardsonii*	2.88
10	Illinois pondweed	*Potomageton illinoensis*	0.93
11	Largeleaf pondweed	*Potomageton amplifolius*	2.22
15	Wild Celery	*Vallisneria Americana*	5.24
17	Northern milfoil	*Myriophyllum sibiricum*	1.01
20	Coontail	*Ceratophyllum demersum*	0.69
21	Elodea	*Elodea Canadensis*	1.18
25	Naiad	*Najas flexilis*	5.32
27	Sago pondweed	*Potomageton pectinatus*	0.69

	Emergent- Native		
30	Water lily	*Nymphaea odorata*	0.11
39	Cattail	*Typha spp.*	10.63
40	Bulrush	*Scirpus spp.*	12.17
	Emergent - Exotic		
44	Common reed	*Phragmites*	0.31*
	Total		**71.11**

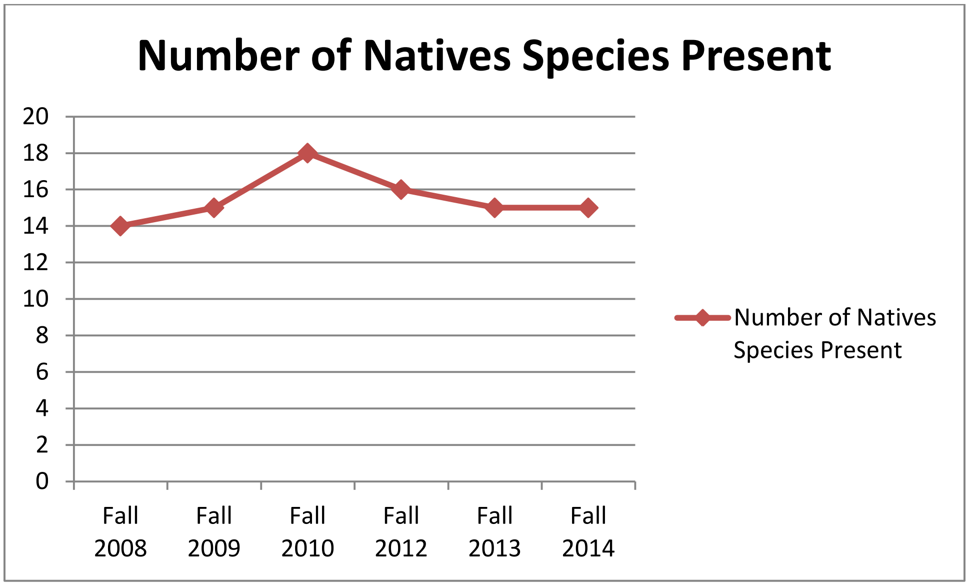
** Based from boat survey, not as precise as a walking shoreline survey.*

Graph 1: EWM & Native Plant Cumulative Cover (Fall AVAS Surveys)



This graph shows the cumulative coverage of EWM from 2008-2014 as well as the overall cumulative coverage of all native plants in Portage Lake. The overall decline in the presence of EWM from the start of the management program shows the success of the treatments and that the population is currently being maintained at very low levels. The native plant population will naturally vary from year to year based on weather, water depth and many other factors; but has been maintained during the treatment of EWM. Please note that the EWM data marked with purple dots was data collected from another firm and not by PLM. This information was taken from the *Portage Lake Forever* website and used with permission of the board.

Graph 2: Native Plant Diversity (Fall AVAS Surveys)



This graph shows the diversity of native plants found in Portage Lake. Portage Lake has excellent native plant diversity and this has been maintained throughout managing the EWM.

Current Conditions in the Lake

Aquatic Vegetation

Over the years the presence of Eurasian watermilfoil and curly leaf pondweed undoubtedly reduced native plant diversity in the lake. Curlyleaf pondweed, although aggressive, naturally dies out mid season and the increase in native plants after that die off is evident when looking at the early and late season surveys. Native plants currently have a good diversity and density in the lake.

Native plant diversity will continue to be promoted in the lake. The native plant species in Portage Lake benefit the lake, performing such functions as stabilizing sediments and providing habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. In general, native species cause few problems, compared with those caused by exotic plants. Plant diversity is key to maintaining and improving the overall ecological balance of Portage Lake.

All of the plants listed in Table 3 are native North American species except Eurasian watermilfoil, Curlyleaf pondweed and Phragmites. These plants are non-indigenous aquatic nuisance species, i.e., plants from other places. These exotic plants cause considerably more problems than most native species. Eurasian watermilfoil can attain nuisance levels of growth at almost any time of year, whereas curly leaf pondweed completes its lifecycle and drops out of the water column by approximately the Fourth of July.

The native plant species in Portage Lake benefit the lake, performing such functions as stabilizing sediments and providing habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. In general, native species cause few problems, compared with those caused by exotic plants. Three species commonly found in Portage Lake are Coontail, Sago pondweed and Wild Celery.

		
Coontail	Sago pondweed	Wild Celery

Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring is a critical part of lake management. Water quality monitoring provides an ongoing record of conditions in a waterbody. Changes in water quality can indicate threats from sources such as failed or inadequate septic systems, agricultural and lawn runoff, burgeoning development and erosion from construction site. Prompt identification of threats to water quality makes it possible to remedy them before irreversible harm has been done. Riparian's enjoyment of the water resource and the value of their property depend on maintaining water quality. The following table break down the parameters tested in the different locations in Portage Lake including the Deep Hole Basins, shoreline sites, Tributaries and Storm Drains.

The graphs and tables below contain historical water quality data on Portage Lake that has been collected from numerous parties other than PLM. All information was made available to PLM via the Invasive Species Committee, on behalf of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever and Onekama Township and used with permission.

Map 6: Portage Lake Water Quality Testing Locations

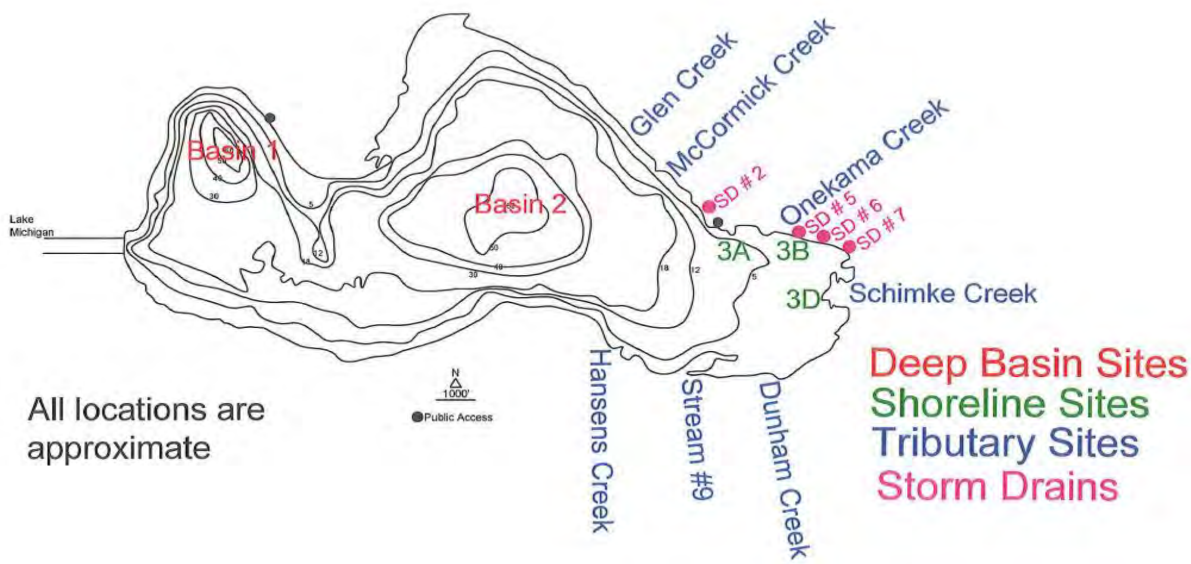


Table 4: Tributary Water Quality Portage Lake –2014 –cloudy/breezy/65

5/8/2014	Temp (F)	D.O. (mg/L)	Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)	TDS (mg/L)	pH (S.U.)	TP (ug/L)	ORP (mV)	Turb. (NTU)	TKN (mg/L)	Flow (Ft/sec)	Nitrate (mg/L)	Amm-onia (mg/L)
Glenn	50.97	16.16	437	284	8.4	19	363	1.2	1.74	0.6	1.07	0.003
McCormick	50.21	10.91	433	281	8.2	23	396	1.7	2.78	1.9	0.533	0.134
Onekama	50.63	13.02	411	267	8.51	16	320	1.3	5.83	0.2	1.01	0.007
Schimke	48.84	13.33	390	253	8.35	14	379	1.9	0.87	0.8	0.811	0.015
Dunham	48.99	15.29	389	253	8.3	18	407	0.93	1.7	1	0.96	0.056
Hansen	48.7	12.6	469	305	8.1	21	417	0.93	1.05	1.1	0.517	0.033
9/24/2014	**Temp (F)**	**D.O. (mg/L)**	**Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)**	**TDS (mg/L)**	**pH (S.U.)**	**TP (ug/L)**	**ORP (mV)**	**Turb. (NTU)**	**TKN (mg/L)**	**Flow (Ft/sec)**	**Nitrate (mg/L)**	**Amm-onia (mg/L)**
Glenn	50.19	8.77	430	279	8.38	17	456	2.5	1.7	0.6	1.24	0.029
McCormick	51.08	8.34	451	293	8.23	24	461	2	1.09	1.9	0.82	<0.015
Onekama	49.71	8.61	421	274	8.36	11	431	1.5	1.66	1.8	1.11	<0.015
Schimke	49.62	8.73	418	272	8.27	13	411	1.9	2.48	1.2	0.91	<0.015
Dunham	48.95	9.12	403	262	8.24	11	375	1.1	5.99	0.8	1	<0.015
Hansen	50.61	7.5	464	302	8.12	19	449	4.6	3.39	0.02	0.65	0.019
Stream #9	51.6	8.6	384	249	8.24	55	330	8.3	2.5	1.4	0.76	0.015

Table 5: Deep Hole Basin 1 Portage Lake –2014 (June Secchi Disc 17.5', September Secchi Disc 18')

Basin 1 June 6 2014	Temp (F)	D.O. (mg/L)	Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)	TDS (mg/L)	pH (S.U.)	TP (ug/L)	ORP (mV)	Turb. (NTU)	TKN (mg/L)	ALK (mg/L)	Nitrate (mg/L)	Amm-onia (mg/L)	Chlor. A (ug/L)
s.	66.36	9.74	309	201	8.51	11	339	0.53	1.93	136	<.5	<0.015	-0.93
10'	66.18	9.74	308	200	8.5		397	0.58					
20'	56.01	11.7	298	194	8.42		422	1					
30'	52.23	13.03	297	193	8.39	<10	355	1.3	<.10	118	<.5	<0.015	3.6
40'	51.27	12.61	299	194	8.3		390	0.66					
50'	50.86	12.33	300	195	8.25		416	0.67					
60'	50.86	11.09	304	198	7.9	19	350	1.6	0.48	121	<.5	0.028	-1.01
Basin1 Sep24 2014	**Temp (F)**	**D.O. (mg/L)**	**Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)**	**TDS (mg/L)**	**pH (S.U.)**	**TP (ug/L)**	**ORP (mV)**	**Turb. (NTU)**	**TKN (mg/L)**	**ALK (mg/L)**	**Nitrate (mg/L)**	**Amm-onia (mg/L)**	**Chlor. A (ug/L)**
s.	62.18	7.11	295	192	8.51	20	448	0.86	5.84	114	<.23	0.025	none
10'	60.78	7.62	294	191	8.54		386	1.1					
20'	60.56	8.1	294	191	8.53		383	1					
30'	59.12	8.07	297	193	8.37	12	443	1.1	2.57	106	<.23	0.036	-8.97
40'	53.47	4.27	310	202	7.76		377	0.97					
50'	52.86	3.2	311	202	7.65		320	1.1					
60'	52.7	2.72	313	203	7.61	61	448	1.1	6.18	111	<.23	0.341	5.13

Table 6: Deep Hole Basin 2 Portage Lake –2014 (June Secchi Disc 16.5’, September Secchi Disc 14’)

Basin 2 June 6 2014	Temp (F)	D.O. (mg/L)	Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)	TDS (mg/L)	pH (S.U.)	TP (ug/L)	ORP (mV)	Turb. (NTU)	TKN (mg/L)	ALK (mg/L)	Nitrate (mg/L)	Amm-onia (mg/L)	Chlor. A (ug/L)
s.	66.81	9.42	308	200	8.54	10	392	1.3	<.10	134	<.5	<0.015	-3.204
10'	66.09	9.66	308	200	8.54		392	0.69					
20'	62.90	10.42	306	199	8.42		390	0.59					
30'	58.89	11.49	303	197	8.32	<10	394	0.82	1.35	131	<.5	<0.015	-7.476
40'	54.78	10.58	311	202	8.10		337	0.63					
50'	54.23	8.86	315	205	7.92		335	1					
60'	54.06	6.85	316	20	7.64	<10	396	3	<.1	130	<.5	0.032	4.4055
Basin2 Sep24 2014	**Temp (F)**	**D.O. (mg/L)**	**Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)**	**TDS (mg/L)**	**pH (S.U.)**	**TP (ug/L)**	**ORP (mV)**	**Turb. (NTU)**	**TKN (mg/L)**	**ALK (mg/L)**	**Nitrate (mg/L)**	**Amm-onia (mg/L)**	**Chlor. A (ug/L)**
s.	62.7	7.83	295	192	8.54	10	271	0.86	4.36	112	<.23	0.028	2.56
10'	62.31	8.29	295	192	8.54		295	1.5					
20'	61.75	8.37	295	192	8.52		274	1.1					
30'	61.7	8.49	295	192	8.51	18	276	1.3	1.77	108	<.23	0.021	6.41
40'	61.23	8.19	296	192	8.42		251	1.7					
50'	50.72	7.94	297	193	8.35		269	1.2					
60'	60.63	7.59	297	193	8.31	13	281	2.6	2.39	106	<.23	0.045	2.56

Table 7: Shoreline Sampling Portage Lake –2014

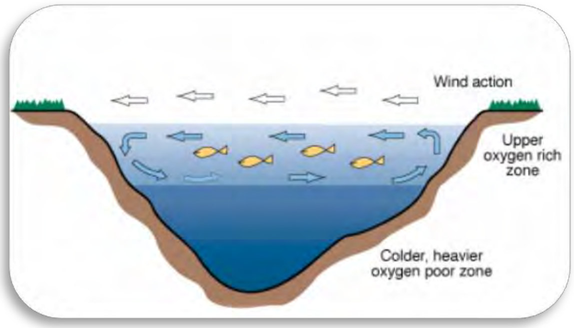
Jun4 Secchi	Temp (F)	D.O. (mg/L)	Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)	TDS (mg/L)	pH (S.U.)	TP (ug/L)	ORP (mV)	Turb. (NTU)	TKN (mg/L)	ALK (mg/L)	Nitrate (mg/L)	Amm-onia (mg/L)	Chlor. A (ug/L)
A 8.5’	66.4	8.65	311	202	8.48	18	335	1.2	<.1	145	<.5	0.019	-4.539
B 3.5’	66.9	8.66	317	206	8.43	<10	327	0.93	<.1	133	<.5	0.022	-4.272
D 6.0’	68.3	9.86	303	215	8.58	13	334	1.2	<.1	144	<.5	0.044	8.0367
Oct1 Secchi	**Temp (F)**	**D.O. (mg/L)**	**Conduct-ivity (uS/cm)**	**TDS (mg/L)**	**pH (S.U.)**	**TP (ug/L)**	**ORP (mV)**	**Turb. (NTU)**	**TKN (mg/L)**	**ALK (mg/L)**	**Nitrate (mg/L)**	**Amm-onia (mg/L)**	**Chlor. A (ug/L)**
A 8.0’	61.1	10.4	298	193	8.38	10	309	0.52	4.63	106	<.23	0.024	2.05
B 4.0’	60.8	9.4	303	197	8.34	12	338	0.45	2.73	103	<.23	0.018	5.34
D 6.0’	60.9	9.62	306	200	8.34	15	342	0.55	2.52	110	<.23	0.027	-1.04

Table 8: Storm Drain Sampling Portage Lake – May 8, 2014

	Temp (F)	D.O. (mg/L)	Cond. (uS/cm)	TDS (mg/L)	pH (S.U.)	TP (ug/L)	ORP (mV)	Turb. (NTU)	TKN (mg/L)	Flow (Ft/sec)	Weather
#2 Zosel Park	48.54	16.45	739	480	7.95	27	436	2.3	0.41	.4, clear	No rain
#5 Fourth St	48.2	10.18	572	372	7.77	42	428	2	0.43	.1, clear	No rain
#6 Third St	50.99	11.87	443	288	7.95	48	451	1.1	1.03	.4, clear	No rain
#7 First St.	51.26	2.09	388	252	7.92	31	445	1.7	0.72	.0, murky	No rain

Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Profiles

Depth profiles of temperature and dissolved oxygen indicate that on June 6 the lake was already stratified. The surface levels were above saturation, 9.74 mg/L at Basin 1 and 9.42 mg/L at Basin 2 with shoreline ranging from 8.65 to 9.86 mg/L. At this time, Portage Lake had adequate dissolved oxygen all the way down to 60' in depth (11.09 mg/L in Basin 1 and 6.85 mg/L in Basin 2). On June 6 the lake was thermally stratified, with a thermocline at approximately 20'. The epilimnion (i.e., water above the thermocline) was well oxygenated, with oxygen concentrations at adequate levels to support a healthy fishery. Conditions in the hypolimnion (i.e., water below the thermocline) were also oxygenated.



On May 8, four storm drains and six tributaries were tested coming into Portage Lake. All sites were well oxygenated ranging from 10.18 to 16.45 mg/L, except one site Storm Drain #7 at First St. The oxygen levels here were low, but it was not currently flowing at the time of sampling either.

In September, it appeared that the lake was starting to mix during the sampling period. Basin 1 was stratified and was anoxic below the thermocline (void of oxygen). The thermocline in Basin 1 was 40' and at that point the oxygen levels started a quick drop from 4.27 mg/L to 2.72 mg/L at the bottom; anoxic water. This numbers are slightly higher than in 2013. 3.0 mg/L is generally considered anoxic. In Basin 2, the surface waters had already mixed and no definite thermocline was found. Oxygen levels, similar to temperature, were rather consistent from top to bottom ranging from 8.49 mg/L to 7.59 mg/L at the bottom of the lake.

Substantial oxygen demand leads to rapid deoxygenation of the hypolimnion upon thermal stratification in the spring and oxygen concentrations are frequently decreased in bottom waters during the summer. Depletion of oxygen beneath the thermocline during the summer is a common symptom of eutrophication, and often leads to elevated internal nutrient loading as the result of the release of phosphorus from hypolimnetic sediments.

pH

pH describes the balance between acids and bases in the water. Neutral values of pH are desirable. Low pH values typically result either from the growth of bog vegetation (such as peat moss), acid precipitation ("acid rain"), or acid runoff (as in acid mine drainage). Excessive growth of certain plants and algae can raise pH values. A majority of Michigan lakes have pH values in the 7-9 range. Portage Lake pH was recorded in Basin 1 and Basin 2 in the June and September as well as in the tributaries and shoreline sites. The pH in June ranged 7.64-8.54 and in September from 7.61-8.54. The shoreline sampling was similar to the deep hole basins as was the tributary and storm drain sampling. This data is consistent with 2013 and previous sampling.

Total Alkalinity

Alkalinity, in addition to pH, measures the amount of dissolved bases and the balance of acids and bases in the water. Alkalinity specifically measures the concentration of carbonates and bicarbonates in the water. These compounds and other ions associated with them can make water "hard". High alkalinity lakes are hardwater lakes, while low alkalinity lakes are softwater lakes. Different kinds of plants, algae and other aquatic organisms live in hardwater versus softwater. Alkalinity is a basic characteristic of water and is neither inherently good nor bad. Total Alkalinity was measured in June and September in both Basin 1 and Basin 2. The average sampling between both basins in June was 128 mg/L with a range of 118-136 mg/L. The September samples were similar with an average of 109 mg/L with a range of 108-114 mg/L. All sampling show the lake to be considered “soft” with readings under 150 mg/L, a typical threshold of a hardwater lake. The September readings on the lake are slighter lower than 2013 readings, but overall rather consistent when looking at previous recordings for Portage Lake.

Conductivity and Total Dissolved Solids

Conductivity and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) measure the total amount of material dissolved in the water. Higher values indicate potentially rich, more productive water, whereas lower values indicate potentially clean, less productive water. (If nutrient pollution is occurring, the total phosphorus concentration is a much better indicator of potential productivity.) The readings of TDS on Portage Lake ranged from June readings averaging 198 mg/L to September readings averaging 194 mg/L. (Shoreline samplings were very similar to deep basins). The tributary sampling was only slightly higher. Overall, these averages classify the overall TDS of Portage Lake as Low Dissolved material. The conductivity readings on Portage Lake are slightly higher than the TDS readings and overall the spring readings (average 286 uS/cm) were slightly lower than the September readings (average 298 uS/cm), likely due to runoff which is also supported by the higher conductivity readings from the Tributaries (May average Conductivity reading is 420 uS/cm while September average is 424 uS/cm). The tributary Conductivity readings are almost considered high dissolved salts (material). All of these numbers are similar to past data collected.

Oxidative Reduction Potential (ORP)

The oxidative reduction potential of a lake measures the ability of the water to serve as potential oxidizers and indicates the degree of reductants present within the water (the ability to gain or lose electrons). The reduction potential measurement has proven useful as an analytical tool in monitoring changes in a system rather than determining their absolute value. Like pH, the redox potential represents an intensity factor. It does not characterize the capacity of the system for oxidation or reduction; in much the same way that pH does not characterize the buffering capacity. Generally speaking, higher ORP values, the healthier the lake. As a lake stratifies and oxygen levels decrease towards the bottom of the lake, ORP values will decrease even in a healthy lake due to the lack of oxygen. This is because there are many bacteria working in the sediments to decompose the material and they use up the available oxygen. ORP is measured in addition to pH and dissolved oxygen as it can provide additional information of the water quality and degree of pollution, if present. High ORP values indicate high levels of oxygen in the water and that bacteria that decompose the dead matter can work more effectively. The deep basins ranged from 335-422 mV in the spring sampling to 251-448mV in September, indicating oxidized conditions. Tributaries and shoreline samples had similar results.

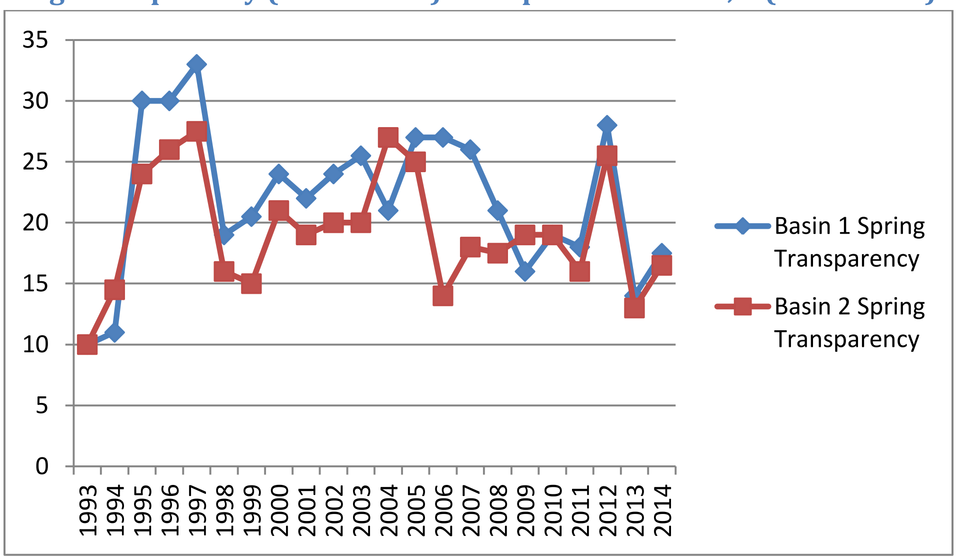
Turbidity

Turbidity is a measure of the clarity of the water, specifically from the presence of suspended particles in the water. Turbidity will typically increase as the suspended particles in the water increase, lowering clarity of the water. Turbidity may be caused by a variety of factors from the bottom sediments, erosion, algae production, and runoff and possibly from fish species such as carp. Suspended particles can capture heat from the sun raising water temperature as well (often witnessed in shallow waters). Turbidity readings on Portage Lake averaged 1.02NTU’s in June to 1.25NTU’s in September with higher readings near the bottom of the lake. Shoreline sampling averaged annually was 0.8 NTU’s while the tributaries average was overall higher, which would be expected in a shallow, flowing system (2.29 average annually). Overall, the turbidity readings on Portage Lake are within safe drinking water standards and overall show that clarity should be very good on the lake.

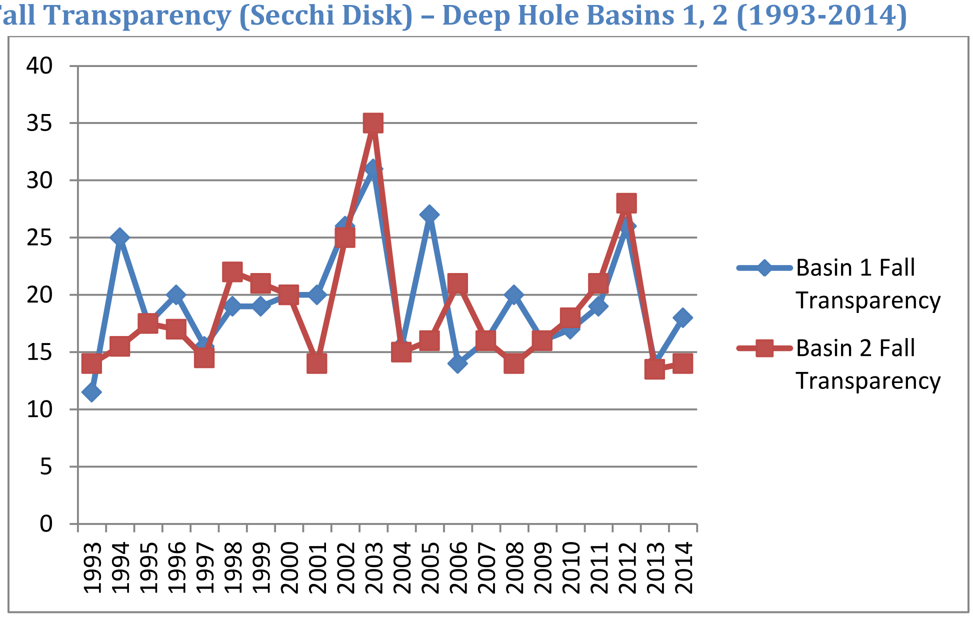
Secchi Disk Depth

The Secchi disk depth is another measure of water clarity, determined by measuring the depth to which a black and white disk can be seen from the surface. (Larger numbers represent greater water clarity.) In June, Basin 1 was 17.5 feet while Basin 2 was 16.5'. Basin 2 is likely more impacted by the fetch of the lake, therefore would likely have a lower Secchi disk reading. Clarity remained consistent all summer with the Secchi disk depth of 18' in September in Basin 1 and 14' in Basin 2. Water clarity can fluctuate from week to week depending on several environmental factors such as rain fall & algal production. These clarity readings show that sunlight will be available for plant and algae throughout much of the lake. The shoreline sampling sites had very good clarity, with all readings reaching the bottom of the lake in both the June and October samplings.

Graph 3: Spring Transparency (Secchi Disk) – Deep Hole Basins 1, 2 (1993-2014)



Graph 4: Fall Transparency (Secchi Disk) – Deep Hole Basins 1, 2 (1993-2014)



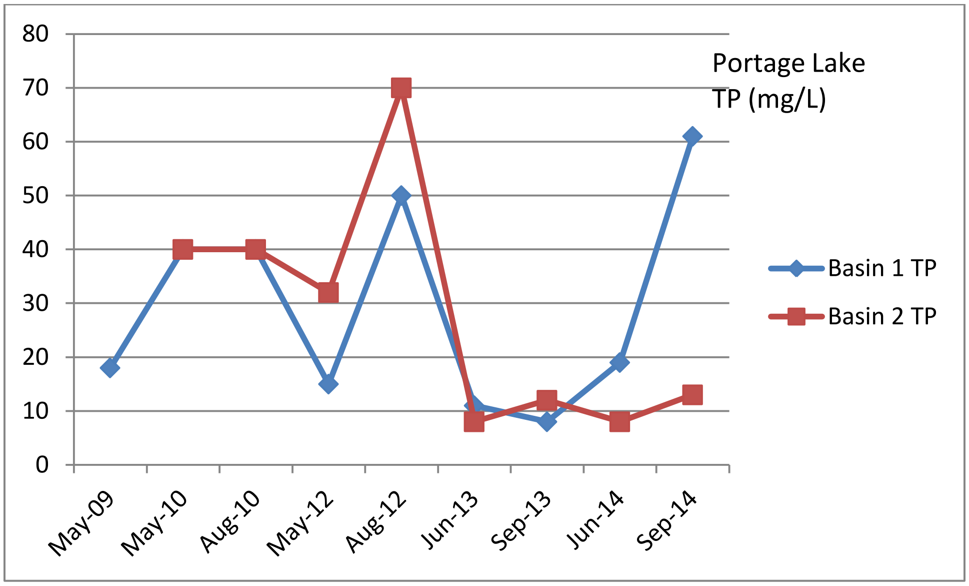
Total Phosphorus

Total phosphorus measures the total amount of phosphorus in the water. Phosphorus is an important plant nutrient (i.e., fertilizer) and the nutrient most likely to limit algal growth. Phosphorus levels are not only related to internal loading of nutrients but also from external sources. Elevated phosphorus inputs to lakes caused by human activities are a major cause of cultural eutrophication. Total phosphorus concentrations in June in Basin 1 were 11 μg/L at the lake surface, and <10 μg/L at thermocline depth and 19 μg/L in the bottom water. In Basin 2, 10 μg/L at the lake surface, and <10 μg/L at thermocline depth and <10 μg/L in the bottom water. The June shoreline readings from sites 3A, 3B and 3D ranged from <10-18μg/L. The tributary TP readings in May ranged from 14-23μg/L. Storm Drain TP May readings were from 27-48μg/L. Readings above 10μg/L are considered slightly enriched while readings over 30μg/L are considered enriched. It is not surprising that the higher TP readings are coming from the tributaries and storm drains.

September Total Phosphorus concentrations were: Basin 1 20μg/L at the surface, 12μg/L in the thermocline and 61μg/L at bottom while Basin 2 10μg/L at the surface, 18μg/L in the thermocline and 13μg/L at bottom. The reading of 61μg/L is the only significant change from 2013. 61μg/L is considered highly enriched. The shoreline readings from sites 3A, 3B and 3D ranged from 10μg/L to 15μg/L while the tributaries overall ranged from 11μg/L to 55μg/L. Stream #9 was not tested in the spring or in 2013 and it was the highest of the September readings, at 55μg/L, which is considered, enriched. The September readings show that overall, higher phosphorus concentrations are found in the tributaries and that internal loading was not a large contributing factor to TP in 2014 except for the Basin 1 deep sample. This sample does indicate internal loading could be taking place and additional testing is recommended. This sample is an outlier when looking at previous data for the deep water basin 1. More sampling is recommended for future analysis. This sample could be reflective of a bad sample, weather patterns or potentially a sign of internal loading, especially considering the void of oxygen present at that time. The 2014 data shows the TP has increased in both Basins in 2014 after a drop in the 2013 data. Additional data to see if this change is unique to 2014 or continuing to spike closer to 2011 and 2012 data is recommended. Basin 2 is routinely higher in concentrations than Basin 1, which is expected due to the fetch and potential lack of oxygen of Portage Lake; however, is showing lower concentrations overall versus Basin 1 in 2013 and 2014.

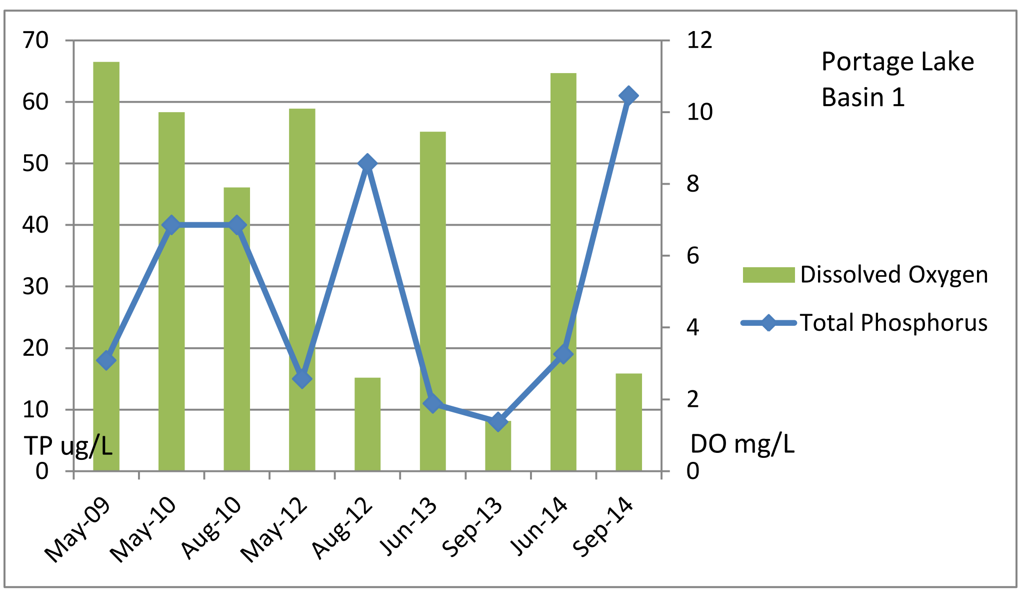
See below graphs of TP concentrations from 2014. Basin 1 and 2 are graphed using data previously collected on Portage Lake (via various sources, provided to PLM via the Portage Lake Watershed Forever website with permission from the committee).

Graph 5: Total Phosphorus – Deep Hole Basins 1, 2 Bottom (2009-2014)



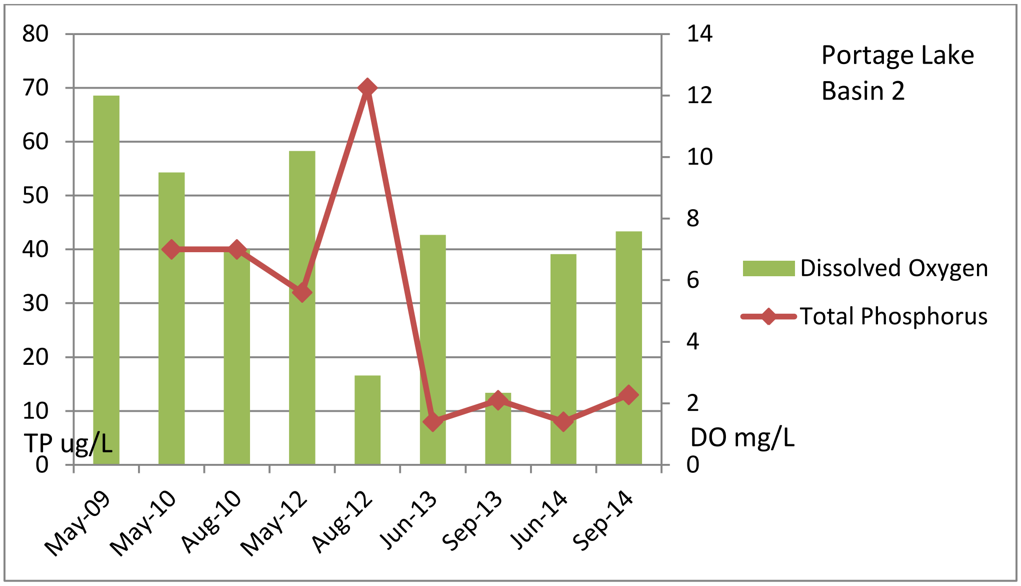
As the graph illustrates, there have been a few spikes in the TP concentrations over time, an overall decrease in 2013 and a large spike in Basin 1 in 2014. Additional testing is recommended to see if this spike is from sampling error, response of low oxygen levels in bottom waters and/or reflective of seasonal changes. Basin 2 is routinely higher in TP than Basin 1, highlighting the abnormality in the Basin 1 September sample. Note: Basin 2 May 2009 sample is not graphed as the reading of 340 mg/L is an extreme outlier and not reflective of the overall lake results.

Graph 6: Total Phosphorus & Dissolved Oxygen – Deep Hole Basin 1, Bottom (2009-2014)



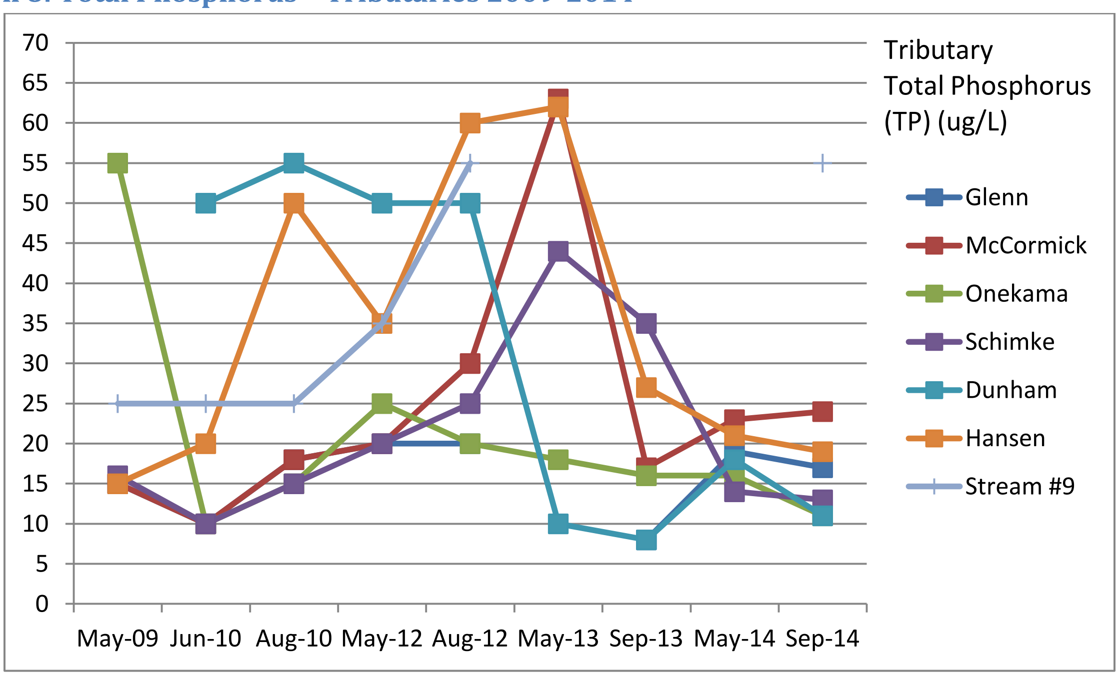
Internal loading can take place when dissolved oxygen levels decrease. As evident in the September 2014 sampling, as DO decreased, TP increased. A void of oxygen is likely the cause of the spike in this TP sampling. The spike could also be a result of a bad sample as well. Additional sampling is recommended.

Graph 7: Total Phosphorus & Dissolved Oxygen – Deep Hole Basin 2, Bottom (2009-2014)



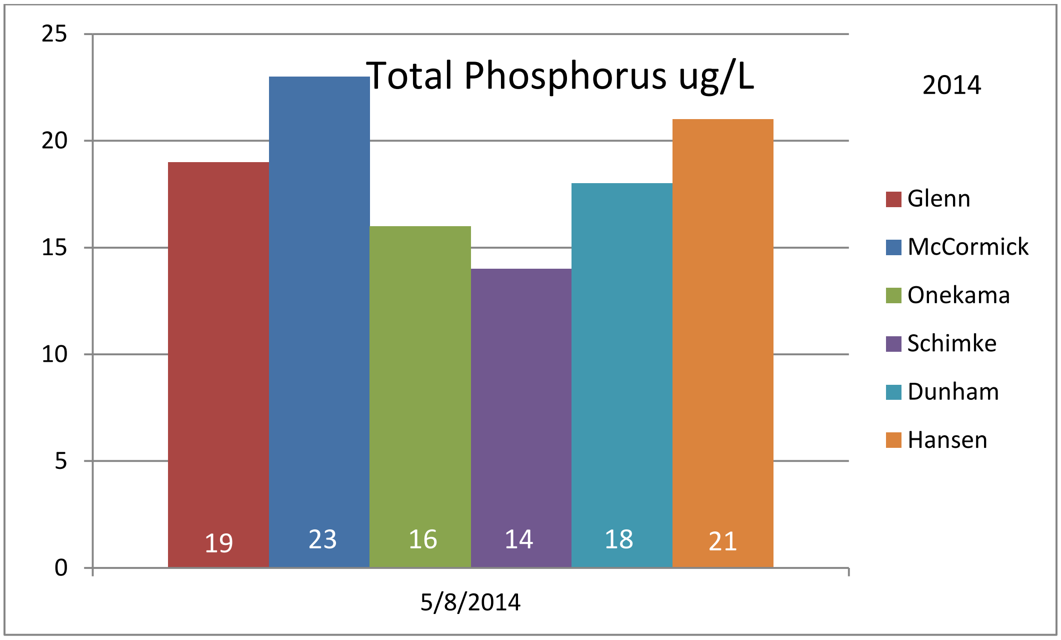
Consistent DO levels indicate little internal loading in Basin 2. Sept. 2013 showed a decrease in DO and TP did not rise, showing little impact from internal loading, which is a good sign of the overall health of the lake.

Graph 8: Total Phosphorus – Tributaries 2009-2014



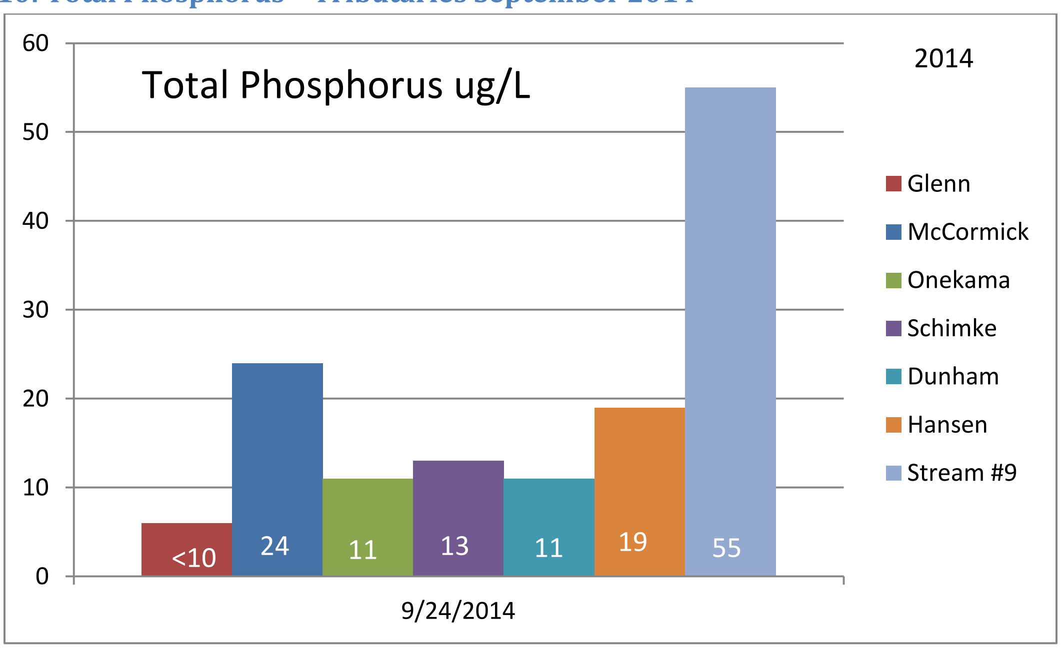
As the graph illustrates, there are fluctuations between the creeks over time. See below graphs to show the 2014 comparisons between the creeks. Glenn Creek June 2013 sample was removed from this graph as an extreme outlier, likely from a bad sample. Stream#9 was not sampled in 2013.

Graph 9: Total Phosphorus – Tributaries May 2014



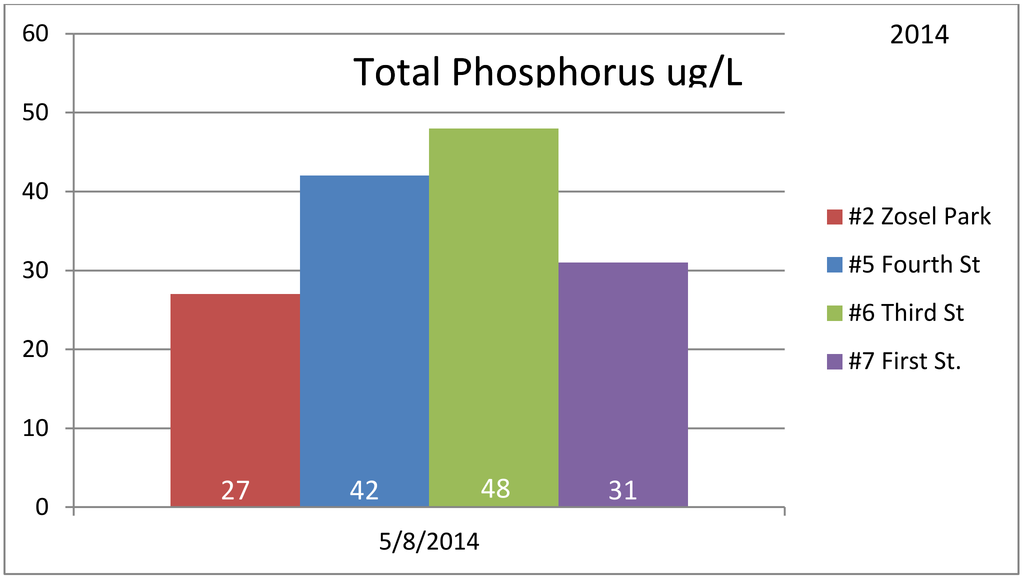
As the graph illustrates, there is fluctuation between the TP in the different creeks entering Portage Lake but there is a larger consistency (lower range) between the data in 2014 as compared to previous sampling years.

Graph 10: Total Phosphorus – Tributaries September 2014



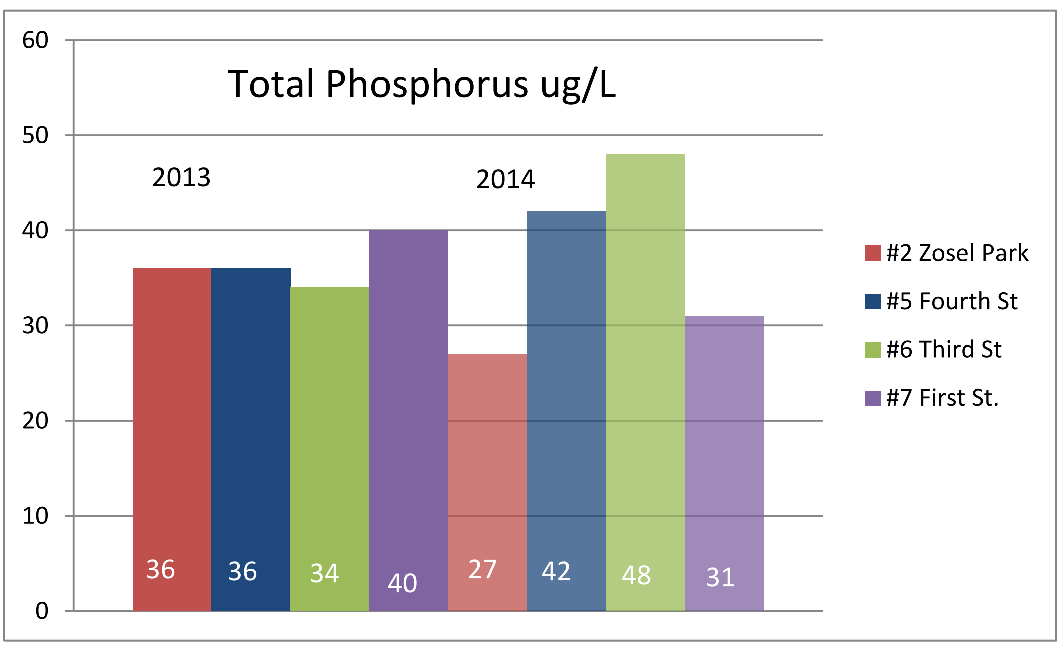
As the graph illustrates, there is a slight fluctuation between the TP in the different creeks entering Portage Lake and overall, the samples are less than 2013. Stream #9 was not sampled in the spring or in 2013 and is very elevated in the September 2014 sampling. Note: TP <10 are graphed above at an estimated level below 10 to show on the graph. Lab analysis is limited to >10 concentrations. Further concentrations <10 are considered very low, not enriched.

Graph 11: Total Phosphorus – Storm Drains May 2014



As the graph illustrates, there is variance between the TP in the different storm drains entering Portage Lake yet all the TP concentrations are considered enriched. These sites are a key introduction point of Phosphorus into Portage Lake.

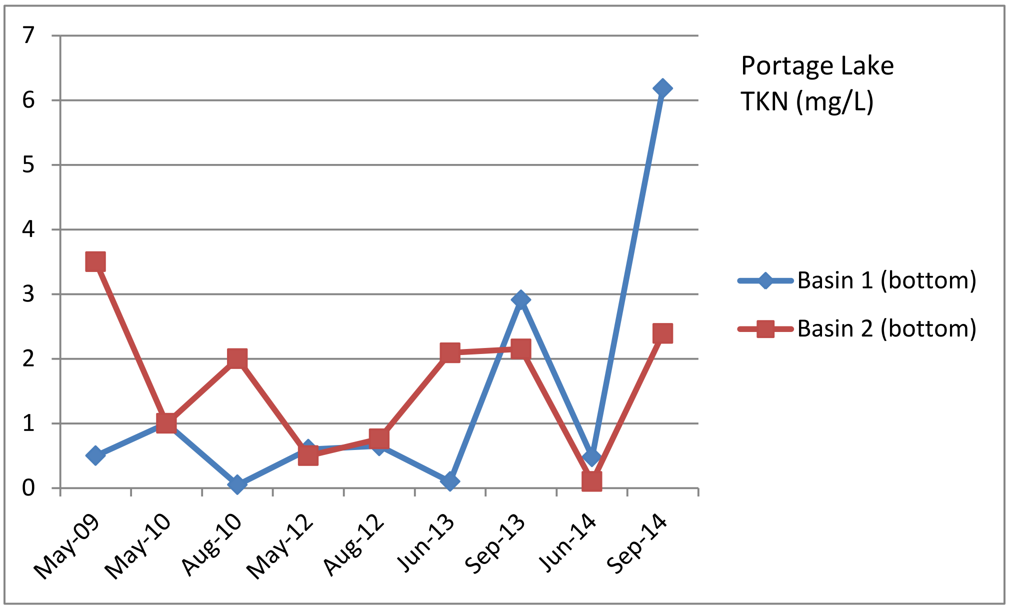
Graph 12: Total Phosphorus – Storm Drains May 2013 & 2014



Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN)

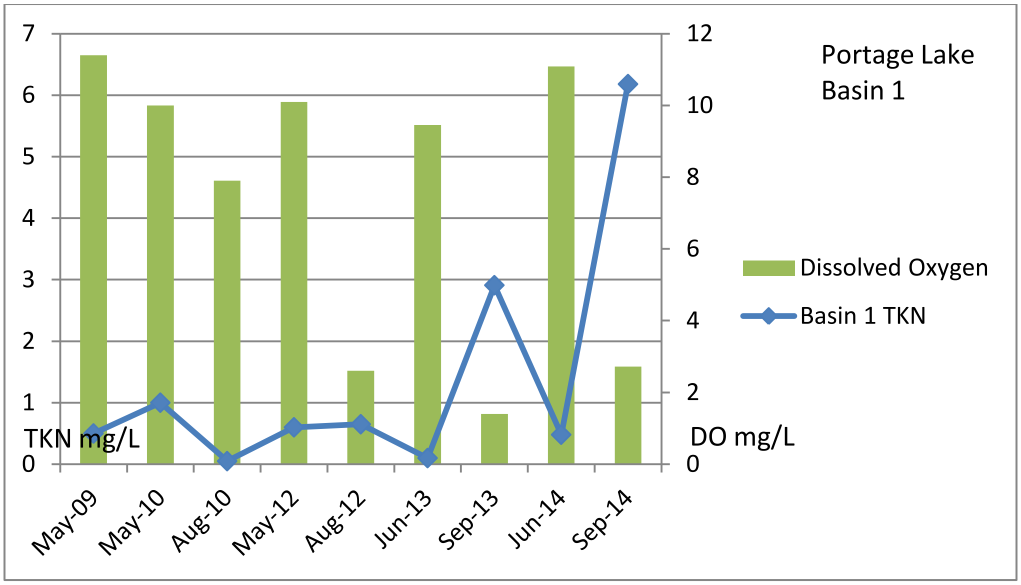
TKN measures the total organic amount of nitrogen (nitrate and nitrite) and ammonia in the water. Nitrogen is the plant nutrient (i.e. fertilizer) most likely to control the amount of rooted plant growth in lakes and ponds. Most Midwestern lakes have more nitrogen and more rooted plant growth than is desirable, so lower values are generally considered better. The major sources of nitrogen in lakes are from agriculture (animal waste, fertilizer) and atmospheric emissions (fossil fuel). Lakes with a TKN value of .66mg/L are typically classified as oligotrophic lakes (having fewer nutrients, less productivity). Lakes with TKN values above 1.88mg/L may be classified as eutrophic (highly productive and nutrient rich). Nitrates do not accumulate very much in the bottom waters during the summer because when nitrate is void of oxygen it turns into ammonia. Therefore ammonia testing is an excellent way to determine internal loading of nitrogen. The TKN readings on Portage Lake at Basins 1 and 2 in June ranged from <.10mg/L to 1.93mg/L however the September samples showed much higher elevated numbers ranging from 1.77mg/L - 6.18mg/L between both basins. The tributaries and storm drains showed elevated TKN numbers in the May, June and September samples ranging from 0.44 mg/L-5.99mg/L. TKN readings have increased in 2014 and additional testing is recommended to tell whether the trend is slowly increasing. These increases show that the lake (at the time of sampling) is Phosphorus limited.

Graph 13: TKN – Portage Lake Basins 1, 2 (2009-2014)



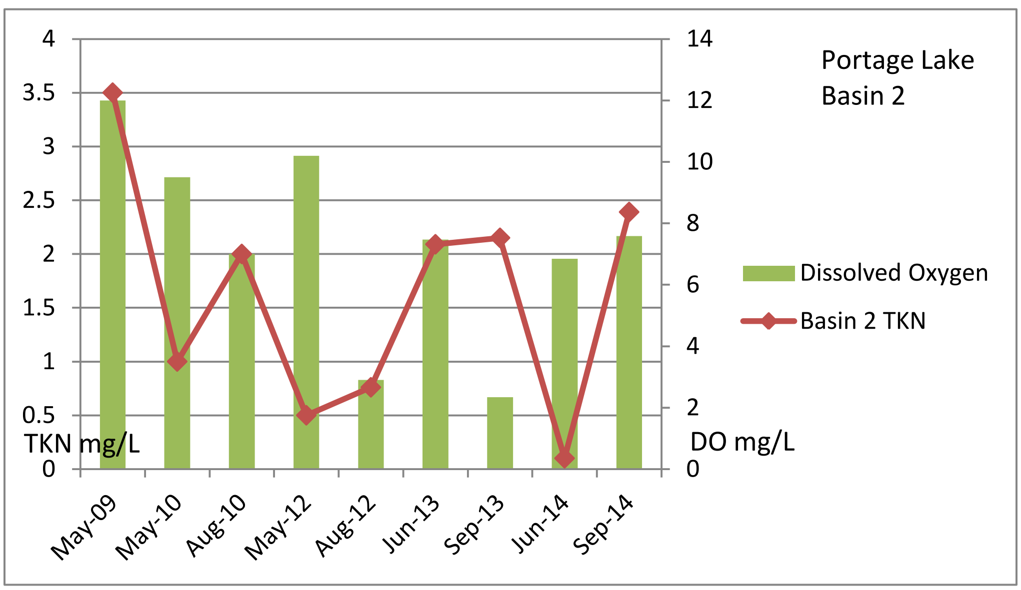
As the graph illustrates, the TKN concentrations on Portage Lake have fluctuated greatly over the last few years, with a large spike in September 2014.

Graph 14: TKN & Dissolved Oxygen– Portage Lake Basin 1 (2009-2014)



Comparing TKN and DO shows that as the DO levels decrease, TKN increase, indicating that internal loading is likely taking place.

Graph 15: TKN & Dissolved Oxygen– Portage Lake Basin, 2 (2009-2014)



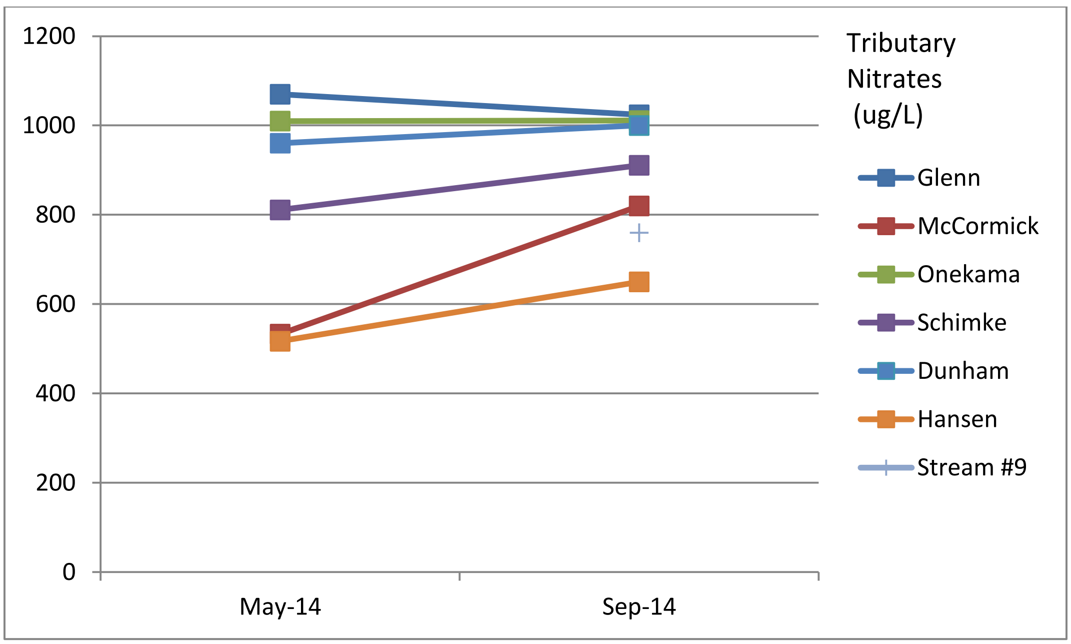
Basin 2 DO levels are maintaining a higher overall average than Basin 1. The TKN levels are also much lower.

Nitrates

Nitrates measure the total amount of in-organic nitrogen in the water. Again, nitrogen is an important plant nutrient (i.e., fertilizer) and the nutrient most likely to limit the growth of rooted plants. Most Midwestern lakes have more nitrogen and more rooted plant growth than is desirable, so lower values are generally considered better. Nitrate levels under 250µg N/L are considered not enriched while readings between 250-750µg N/L are slightly enriched, readings from 750-1250µg N/L are enriched and readings over 1250µg N/L are highly enriched. The June concentrations of nitrates in Basin 1 and 2 were 500 µg N/L throughout the water column. The September concentrations of nitrates were 230µg

N/L in both basins throughout the water column. Nitrates in the tributaries ranged from 500 µg N/ to 1070 µg N/L in the spring and from 650 µg N/ to 1240 µg N/L in September. The Strom Drains had similar readings to the tributaries. Nitrates are typically higher in the spring when the water is colder because the bacteria needed to digest the nitrates are not as productive in cooler temperatures. Nitrates will often decrease over the spring and were slightly less in the lake by the end of the summer. Nitrate levels remained low throughout the rest of the season with an overall lake average of <230 µg N/L. Based on the higher levels of nitrates observed in inlets (Tributaries) in May and September, loading of the lake appears to be mainly from external sources. External sources for nitrate pollution are agricultural practices (manure, fertilizer), animal feedlots, urban runoff and municipal wastewater runoff. Based on the location of Portage Lake and the makeup of the surrounding watershed, nitrate enrichment is most likely coming from agricultural practices that have leached into the groundwater and animal feedlots. Nitrates did not accumulate very much in the bottom waters during the summer. The nitrates did not accumulate because when nitrate is void of oxygen it turns into ammonia. Therefore ammonia testing is a better way to determine internal loading of nitrogen.

Graph 16: Nitrates– Portage Lake Tributaries



As the graph illustrates, the nitrate concentrations in the Portage Lake Tributaries are enriched in 2014. Additional testing recommended.

Ammonia

Ammonia is a form of nitrogen found in organic materials, sewage, and many fertilizers. It is the first form of nitrogen released when organic matter decays. Also, when ammonia degrades it consumes oxygen, which worsens already existing anaerobic conditions. However, ammonia can be used by most aquatic plants and is therefore an important nutrient. When oxygen is present in a lake ecosystem, ammonia will convert to nitrates. Ammonia is toxic to fish at relatively low concentrations in pH-neutral or alkaline water. In fish, ammonia affects hatching and growth rates, and can cause changes in tissues of gills, the liver and the kidneys. Ammonia concentrations below 1000 ug/L are considered suitable for healthy fisheries. Ammonia concentrations usually do not become elevated until water is void of oxygen and the nitrates are converted. Therefore, concentrations of Ammonia did not become elevated until anaerobic conditions are present, typically mid summer. The concentration of ammonia at the Basin 1 in June was 15 ug/L at the surface and 28 ug/L at the bottom while in Basin 2 it was 15 ug/L at the surface and 32 ug/Lat the bottom. The September concentrations were 25 ug/L at the surface and 341 ug/L at the bottom in Basin 1 and 28 ug/L at the surface and 45 ug/L at the bottom in

Basin 2. The hypolimnion (deep water) concentrations observed in September are well within range for a healthy fishery. This higher concentration of ammonia observed in the deep water Basin 1 during September is indicative of the void of oxygen present and a potential release of internal loading. The tributaries had similar levels of ammonia as the lake throughout the season. Ammonia concentrations ranged from 3 ug/L to 134 ug/L in the tributaries.

Chlorophyll

Chlorophyll measures the amount of algae (green plant) in the water. Some algal growth is essential to support the growth of other organisms (e.g., fish) in the lake, but human activities and natural eutrophication often lead to excessive algal growth; thus, lower concentrations of chlorophyll are usually considered desirable. Chlorophyll concentrations in Portage Lake in June (0.93 to 8.0 μg/L) averaged at 3.42ug/L indicate low to moderate algal populations. Shoreline samplings sites (3A, 3B, 3D) averaged 5.5ugl/L, which is higher than in 2013. Chlorophyll increased slightly overall in September to an average 3.62 μg/L at the Deep Hole Basins (.9-5.8ug/L) while the shoreline sites averaged 5.4ug/L. This higher level, in shallow, warmer waters is common as the warmer water can be a breeding ground for algae. Overall, chlorophyll levels are on average low and appear to be less than past years on Portage Lake.

Algae and Zooplankton Composition

Algal composition testing was performed at both deep Basins as well as the shoreline testing sites in June and September. The June testing showed the majority genera present included (presented as must abundant to least abundant); Cyanophyta (blue green algae): Microsystis sp., *Gomphosphaeria sp., Lyngbya sp*; Chlorophyta (green algae): *Pediastrum sp., Scenedesmus sp., Chlorella sp., Ulothrix sp., Cosmarium sp.;* Bacillariophyta (diatoms): *Fragilaria sp*. The September sampling showed that the similar species in the genera were present with Cyanophyta (blue green algae), specifically *Microcystis sp*., the most abundant than other species and genera of phytoplankton. All concentrations were low overall. Some blue green algae, including *Microcystis sp*., can produce toxins. These toxins are normally released when the algae nears the end of the life cycle and often occur for short phases during a growing season, often times towards the end of the season after the water temperatures and nutrient loading have reached a high. Further, blue green algae are not consumed by Zebra mussels, so if Zebra mussels are present in a lake ecosystem, it is likely to have lower green algae populations and higher blue green algae, as the Zebra Mussels will filter the green algae out of the water column and leave the blue green algae alone. The levels of blue green algae are not high enough to warrant a concern at this time. The blue green algae "scum" that forms on the lake surface when densities are extremely high should be avoided if that were to occur, but the densities in Portage Lake are not high enough to cause a bloom at this point. The zooplankton communities were also identified while looking at the phytoplankton and numerous species of zooplankton were documented including; *Cladocera sp., Rotifer sp.,* and *Copepods sp*. Diverse and present phytoplankton is required to have a healthy zooplankton community as the base of the food chain.

Fecal Indicator Bacteria (E. Coli)

Fecal Indicator Bacteria (E. Coli) measurements count the number of live fecal indicator bacteria in the sample. These bacteria are considered reliable indicators of fecal contamination-when they are found in a pond or lake, it is very likely that the water is being contaminated by animal feces. Contamination can potentially be derived from a number of sources, including failed septic systems, agriculture runoff, or waterfowl or wildlife droppings. E. Coli was tested in Portage Lake in July of 2014. Four locations of concern were tested in the lake including the hotel area, Marina, Little Eden and camp. All samples came back very low.

Table 9:E. Coli Results In Portage Lake –2014

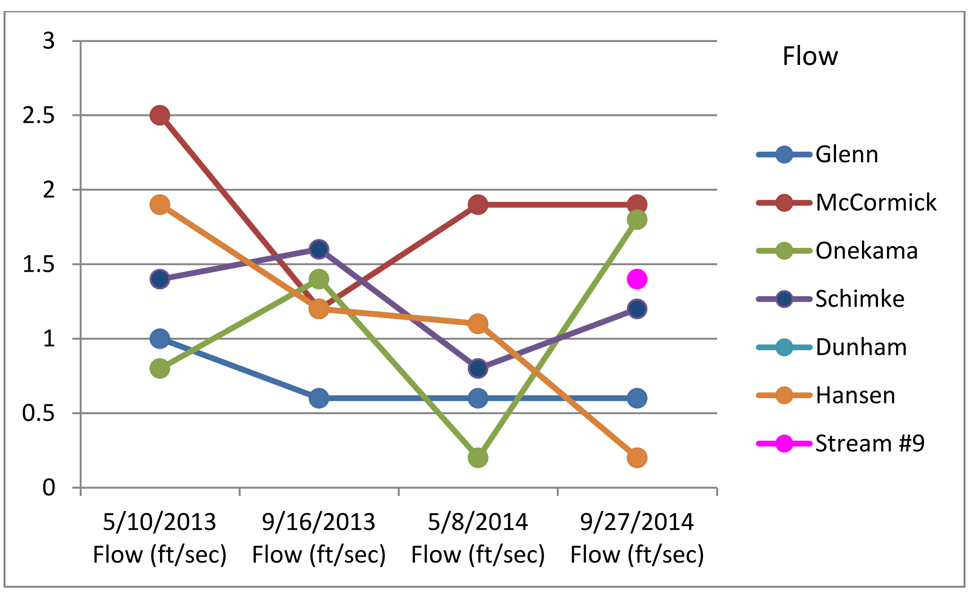
	E. Coli (CFU/100mL)	Total Coliforms (CFU/100mL)	Notes
Marina	12	600	Water meets bacteriological standards for safe swimming
Hotel	<4	190	Water meets bacteriological standards for safe swimming
Little Eden	<4	4	Water meets bacteriological standards for safe swimming
Camp	<4	210	Water meets bacteriological standards for safe swimming

Bacterial counts are expressed as the number of Colony Forming Units per 100 milliliters (CFU/100mL).
For full body contact recreation (including swimming) counts of E. coli should not exceed 130 (CFU/100mL)as a monthly geometric mean of at least five samples per the State of Michigan standard, or single samples should not exceed 298 (CFU/100mL) [235 CFU/100mL in a designated bathing beach area] per Federal (EPA) guidelines. Current recreational water quality standards do not rely on Total Coliform counts.

Tributary Flow and Phosphorus

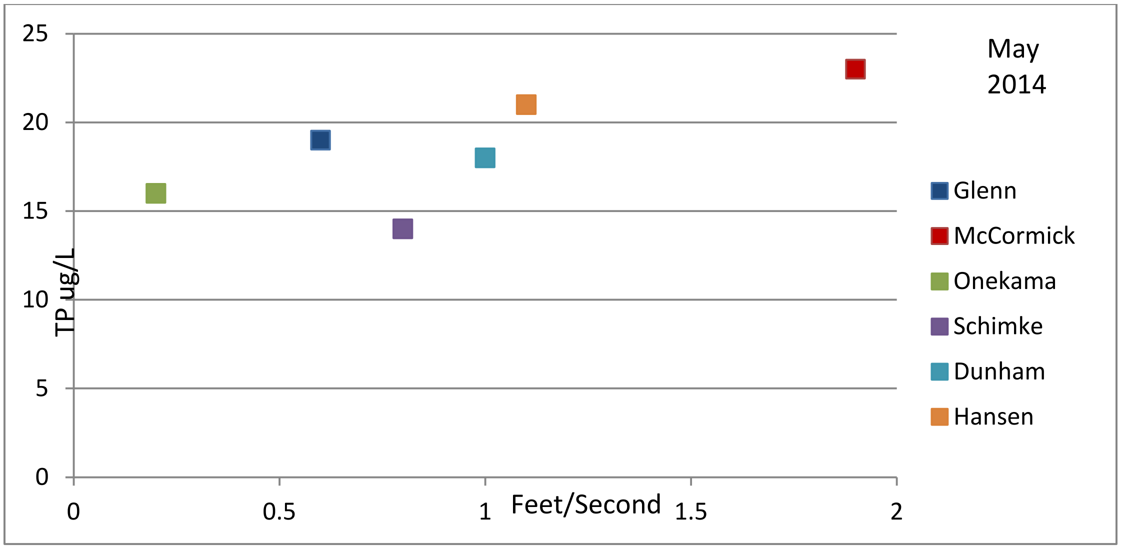
Flow rate data was determined, using a digital flow meter, at the six tributaries studied in 2014 in May and seven tributaries in September 2014. Flow ranged from 0.2 -1.9 feet/second in the May sampling and from 0.02-1.9 feet/second in September with McCormick Creek being the fastest flowing at both samplings. The rates of flow varied from each creek and the basic chemistry varied as well. Nutrients coming in from the creeks are a concern as it is a transport from the watershed into Portage Lake. Total Phosphorus is graphed below along with flow to see how the flow and TP are connected.

Graph 17: Tributary Flow Rates –May and September 2014



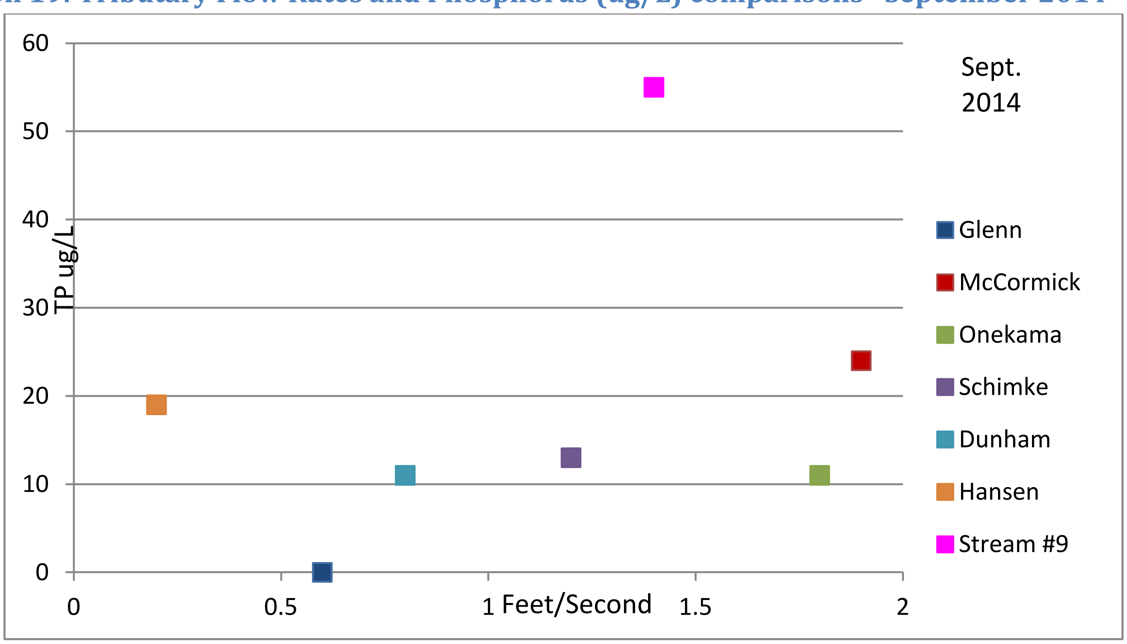
As the graph illustrates, there was a decline in flow rate at the end of the summer versus the beginning of the summer in 2013 while the flow was more consistent throughout the 2014 season

Graph 18: Tributary Flow Rates and Phosphorus (ug/L) comparisons –May 2014



As the graph illustrates, a strong correlation is seen between flow and TP. The greater the flow, the higher the Total Phosphorus.

Graph 19: Tributary Flow Rates and Phosphorus (ug/L) comparisons –September 2014



As the graph illustrates, for the most part, the greater the flow, the higher the Total Phosphorus. Overall a strong correlation is shown between flow and TP in the Creeks sampled.

Evaluation of Trophic Status

Carlson's Trophic State Index (TSI) calculated from June data yielded values between 25 and 36 and from September data yielded values between 24 and 49 (see Table 10). In general, these values rate Portage Lake as meso-oligotrophic to mesotrophic. Characteristics associated with meso- oligotrophic lakes are low nutrient levels, clear water and low productivity. High dissolved oxygen levels typically occur and survival of cold water fish is possible. Mesotrophic lakes tend to have moderate nutrient levels, clear water and moderate productivity. Rooted plants are abundant and the lake can still support a cold water fishery.

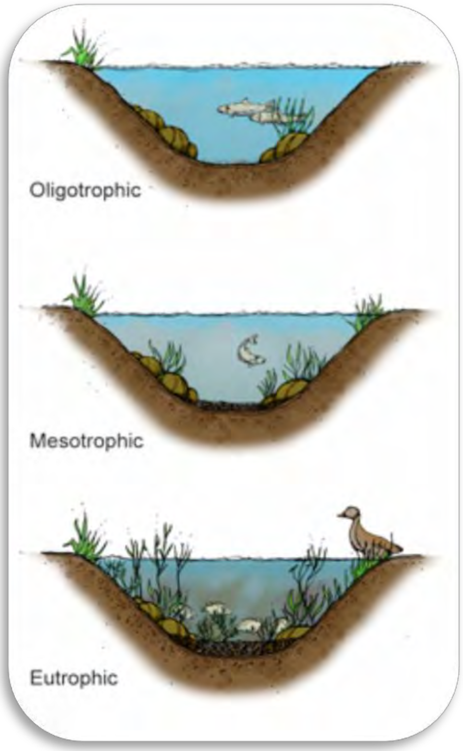


Table 10: 2014 Trophic State Index (TSI) Values

Site	TSI from Secchi Depth	TSI from Total Phosphorus	TSI from Chlorophyll
Basin 1 – June	36	36	25
Basin 2 – June	35	31	25
Basin 1 – Sept	31	49	24
Basin 2 – Sept	39	33	48

2014 Water Quality Concerns/Recommendations

Current water quality problems in Portage Lake result from nutrient loading from the watershed and nutrient rich bottom sediments in the lake. Please note that the overall nutrient levels in Portage Lake are still relativity low compared to most Michigan waterbodies. Reductions in external nutrient loads may eventually reduce internally generated water quality problems, though improvements will require that dramatic reductions in external loading be sustained for long periods of time. Even if sufficient loading reductions are achieved, many years will be required before improvement is evident. In order to manage external nutrient inputs, it would be necessary to develop and implement a watershed management plan for the Portage Lake watershed.

Management Recommendations for 2015

Management options are dependent on many factors, including but not limited too, species abundance (density), species richness, species location and many lake characteristics. Whenever an exotic species is found within an aquatic environment, action needs to be taken to prevent long term ecological damage as well as recreational and aesthetic loss that will take place.

Submersed Aquatic Plants

The 2015 aquatic plant management program should detect and treat any areas where Eurasian watermilfoil or hybrid watermilfoil are present in addition to any other invasive, exotic species.

Any areas of Eurasian watermilfoil should be promptly treated using herbicides. Treatments with the herbicides, Triclopyr and/or 2,4-D, in localized treatment areas to slow the spread of Eurasian watermilfoil, when found should be conducted. The herbicides Triclopyr and 2,4-D, control Eurasian watermilfoil with little or no impact on most native plant species. Since they are selective, systemic herbicides, they can actually kill Eurasian watermilfoil plants. Under ideal conditions, several consecutive annual applications of Renovate or 2,4-D can reduce Eurasian watermilfoil to a maintenance (low) abundance. For this strategy to succeed, it is necessary to treat all the Eurasian watermilfoil in the lake each time they are applied. Michigan regulation restricting 2,4-D use in the vicinity of drinking water wells may result in the inability to apply 2,4-D near the shoreline of the lake.

Triclopyr is a systemic herbicide with selectivity very similar to 2,4-D. Triclopyr is not subject to the well setback restrictions that currently affect 2,4-D. Therefore, triclopyr can be used to control Eurasian watermilfoil in near shore areas. A combination of both systemic herbicides in Portage Lake could greatly reduce the growing Eurasian watermilfoil problem.

Several contact herbicides, including diquat, can also provide short-term control of Eurasian watermilfoil. These herbicides kill only the shoots of the plant, and plants regrow relatively rapidly from their unaffected belowground parts.

Nuisance native plant management can also be incorporated into a lake management program with conventional herbicide treatments if needed. Native plant treatments are completed using only contact herbicides in beach areas. Contact herbicides will not target the root system of the plant.

Emergent Vegetation Management

Purple loosestrife and Phragmites should continue to be addressed around the perimeter of the lake to prevent the further spread of these exotic species. The systemic herbicides, Glyphosate and Imazapyr, are effective at controlling Phragmites while Renovate 3 is effective in controlling Purple Loosestrife. Since they are systemic herbicide, the root system of the plant will be killed not just the foliage. Further, Purple Loosestrife should continue biological control measures as well. In addition, any other invasive terrestrial plants including but not limited to Japanese knotweed, honey suckle and autumn olive should be targeted for control.

Monitoring

Aquatic vegetation and water quality should continue to be monitored to document the condition of the lake and to provide warning of any changes in the condition of the lake that need to be addressed by additional lake management activities.

Proposed Budget

The following budget is proposed based on previous requirement on Portage Lake and the budget is limited to the management and treatment of Portage Lake. If additional costs are required in the formation of the SAD or from outside factors, they may not be included in this budget.

Table 11: Proposed 2015 Budget Portage Lake

Proposed/ Estimated Budget	2015
Emergent Control	7,000
EWM Control	55,000
Permit	1,500
Lake Management	12,500
Contingency Funds	7,600
Total	**83,600**

The Recommended Management Schedule for 2015:

- A spring vegetation survey (to evaluate conditions in the lake).
- Herbicide Treatment for exotics as required
- Pre and post treatment surveys as required, in addition to a mid summer survey
- Extensive water quality monitoring throughout season
- A fall vegetation survey
- Late summer/fall Phragmites and other terrestrial exotic plant treatments