

# STONE LAKE IMPROVEMENT BOARD UPDATE

JULY 2023



Hello, Neighbors!

The Stone Lake Improvement Board created a newsletter to keep our special assessment district neighbors up-to-date with information pertaining directly to Stone Lake. For future newsletters and information, we'd ask that you forward your email to us (see info on last page), which will provide the fastest delivery. The newsletter will also be able accessible through the Village's website ([cassopolis-mi.us](http://cassopolis-mi.us)).

For those new to the area, or even those that need a refresher course, here's a bit of history on how the Stone Lake Improvement Board began and where it's at now:

## WHAT STARTED THE NEED FOR THE ORGANIZATION?

\* For years prior to and up until 2017, Stone Lake was being impeded by nuisance growth of exotic and invasive aquatic plants. In particular, Eurasian watermilfoil had overtaken 66 acres of the lake and was spreading. Watermilfoil, itself, is an invasive species that crowds out beneficial, native aquatic plants that fish and other underwater species rely on for food and shelter. In 2017, the area of watermilfoil was covering 66 acres of a lake that is only 177 acres in total. Needless to say, the lake was very sick and the invasive plant was spreading.

\* The Stone Lake Improvement Board was created (in adherence to state laws governing lake boards) to implement an aquatic plant control program for the lake and oversee the experts who would help bring new life to Stone Lake.

## WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

\* A special assessment district was created to help cover the cost of treatments for six years.

\* Progressive AE was the firm hired to oversee the chemical treatment and harvesting of the lake, using their expertise and extensive knowledge of contractors to bring in the services needed to eradicate the invasive species.

\* In May of 2017, the entire lake was treated to eliminate as much of the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil as possible.

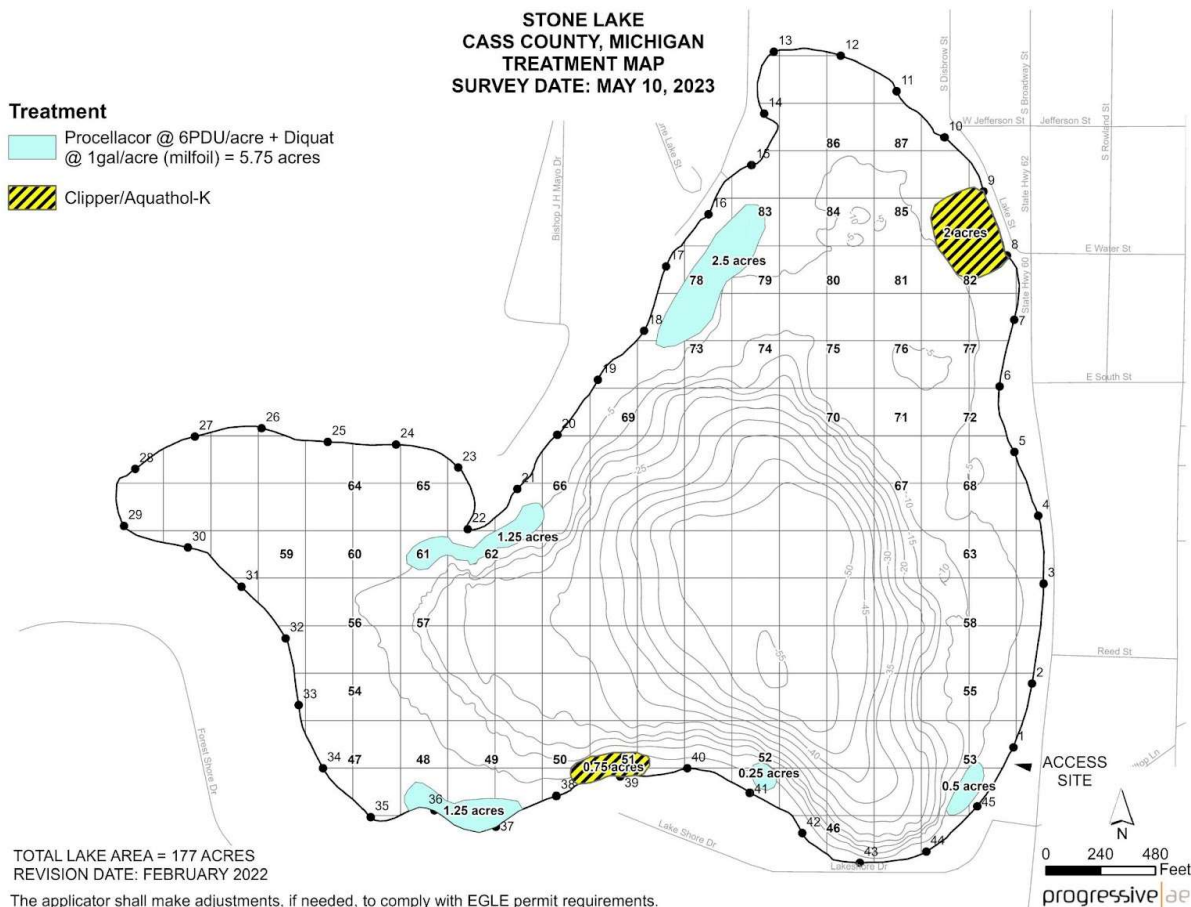
\* Starting in 2018, annual spot treatments were implemented targeting the small areas where milfoil re-emerged, as well as critical areas with significant algae. Also starting in 2018, annual mechanical harvesting was implemented to remove nuisance weeds, as it is far less costly than chemical treatments (and doesn't use chemicals).

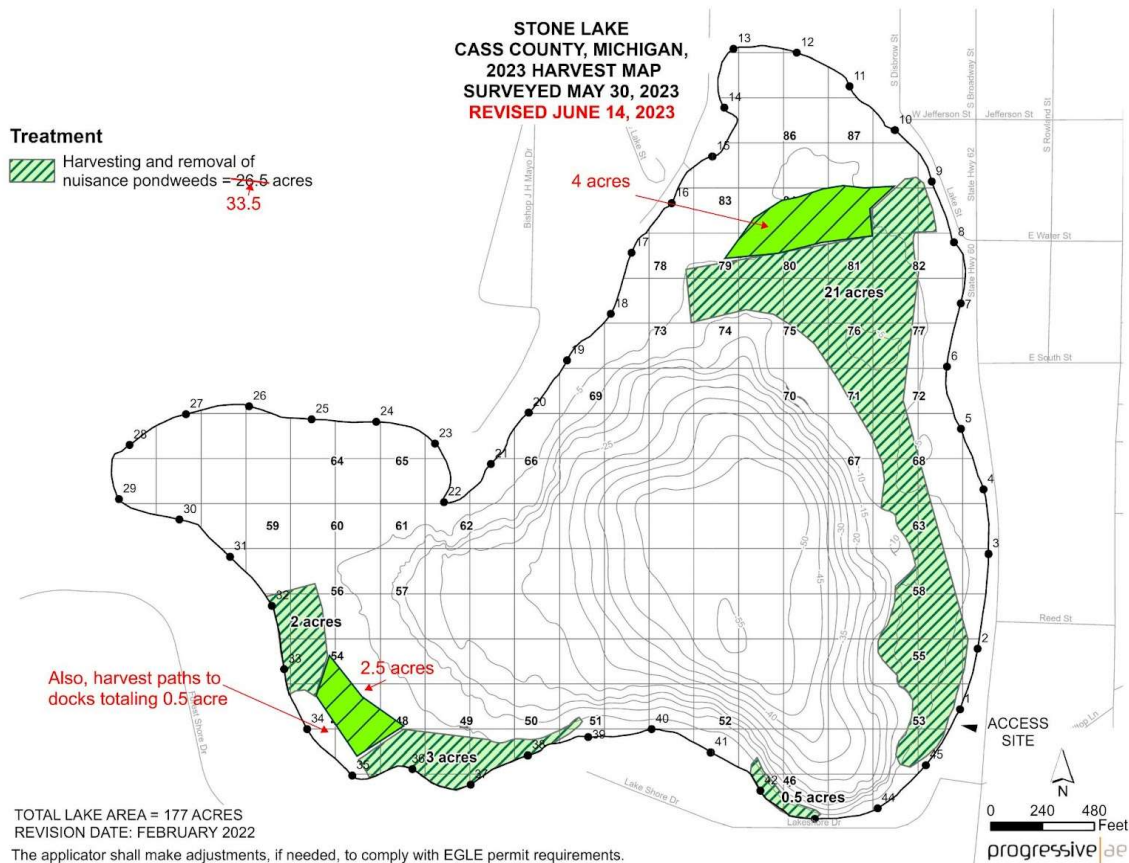
#### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

\* In the 2023 season, 33.5 acres of mechanical harvesting and 8.5 acres of herbicide treatments were completed to continue with the eradication and maintain the progressive improvements which began in 2017. Initially, only 26.5 acres were included in the allotment for this year, but it was expanded to include 7 additional acres, thanks to a Stone Lake neighbor who generously offered to donate funds for additional areas to be harvested. These additional acres connected the previously planned areas on the southwest side of the lake, as well as near the public beach. (Please see maps below)

\* After the initial treatment, .75 (¾) acres of milfoil were discovered and will be treated soon. Obviously, this is a huge improvement since the process began back in 2017!

\* Later this summer, a detailed plant community survey and water quality sample will be taken and assessed at that time.





## INTERESTING FACTS

### STONE LAKE:

- 177 acres
- Maximum depth of 56' and average depth of 16'
- 2.6 miles of shoreline

### MACHINES & HARVESTING:

- Harvesting machines can cut as deep as 5 ½ feet.
- Machines don't operate between docks or near lifts due to potential liability issues, as well as the risk of damaging the machine's cutting blades.
- The primary species targeted for mechanical harvesting is white stem pondweed, a native plant that is growing at nuisance levels in Stone Lake.

### LILY PADS:

- Stone Lake does not have any environmentally protected lily pads.
- There is a state regulation on lily pads whereas property owners are limited to treating 1,600 square feet per property. It is recommended to only cut a path to the owners' dock, as it's not practical or healthy for the lake's ecosystem to try and remove larger sections of lily pads.

### OTHER SPECIES:

- Algae can be treated in developed areas, but the treatment depends on the temperature of the water.
- Curly leaf pondweed tends to die naturally as the water warms up throughout the growing season.

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## MEMBERS OF THE STONE LAKE IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Ted Gogol, Chairman of the Board

Mary Howie, Cass County Commissioner

Jeff VanBelle, Cass County Drain Commissioner

Jackie Collins, Village of Cassopolis Representative

Susan Carpenter, Riparian Owner & Newsletter Editor

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You can reach members of the board by emailing

[STONELAKEIMPROVEMENTBOARD@GMAIL.COM](mailto:STONELAKEIMPROVEMENTBOARD@GMAIL.COM)

Someone will respond to you at their earliest opportunity.

TO MINIMIZE EXPENSES, FUTURE ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER WILL ONLY BE SENT VIA EMAIL, SO PLEASE SHARE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS WITH US. NEWSLETTER WILL ALSO BE ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THE VILLAGE'S WEBSITE AT [CASSOPOLIS-MI.US](http://CASSOPOLIS-MI.US). CLICK ON THE **"SERVICES"** TAB, THEN **"STONE LAKE IMPROVEMENT BOARD"**.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE LAKE

7/25 Taco Tunesday at Stone Lake Beach (6-9pm)

8/12 Rock the Block at Stone Lake Beach

8/22 Taco Tunesday at Stone Lake Beach (6-9pm)

***See "Cassopolis, Michigan" Facebook page for all the details, including more events throughout the town in 2023!***

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