



Les Cheneaux WATERSHED NEWS

.....promoting the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainability of our water-based resources.

SPRING 2026

LES CHENEUX WATERSHED COUNCIL

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

2026 News and Plans

Highlighted in this issue:

- ◆ Lake Level Decline
- ◆ Native Fungus for Non-Native Milfoil Management
- ◆ High School Remote Stream Monitoring
- ◆ Non-Native Cattail Management
- ◆ Lowest PFOS in the State
- ◆ Activities

For details on most topics, see our website:
www.lescheneauxwatershed.org

2026 LCWC Activities

- ◆ FrogFest: July 11th
- ◆ Annual Meeting: July 16th
- ◆ ISEA Sail: August 1st & 2nd



***A sincere THANK YOU to all
who support our projects!***

Find Us on Facebook:
Les Cheneaux Watershed Council

OUR LAKE LEVEL: HOW LOW WILL IT GO?

Lake Michigan-Huron dropped to a record low level in 2013 only to be followed by a rapid rise of almost six feet by 2020. A precipitous decline in lake level has followed. Most models predict a return to the record low level, possibly even lower, during the next several years.



Effects of an unprecedented rapid rise of Lake Michigan-Huron from the record low level in Jan 2013 to a record high level in through Jul 2020 are shown in the figures below.

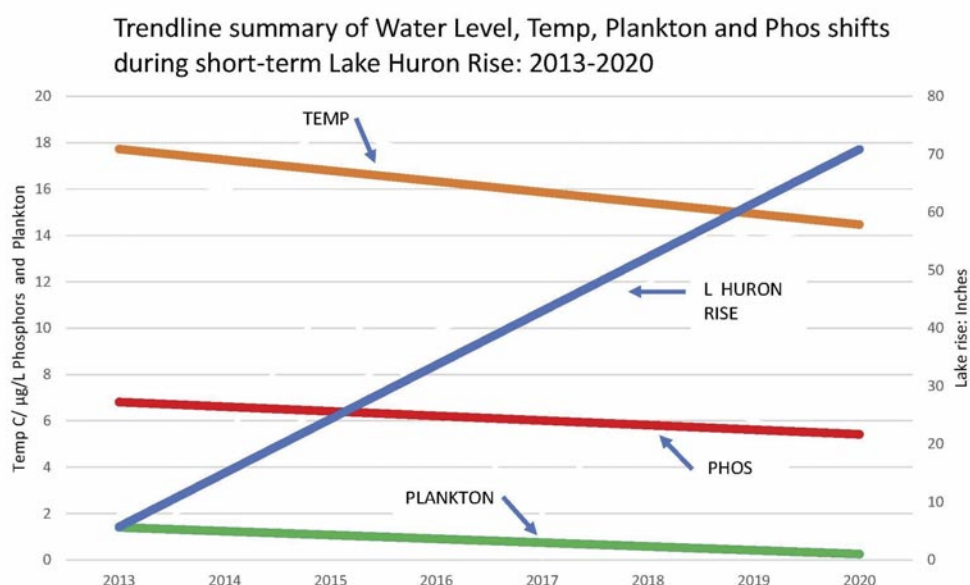
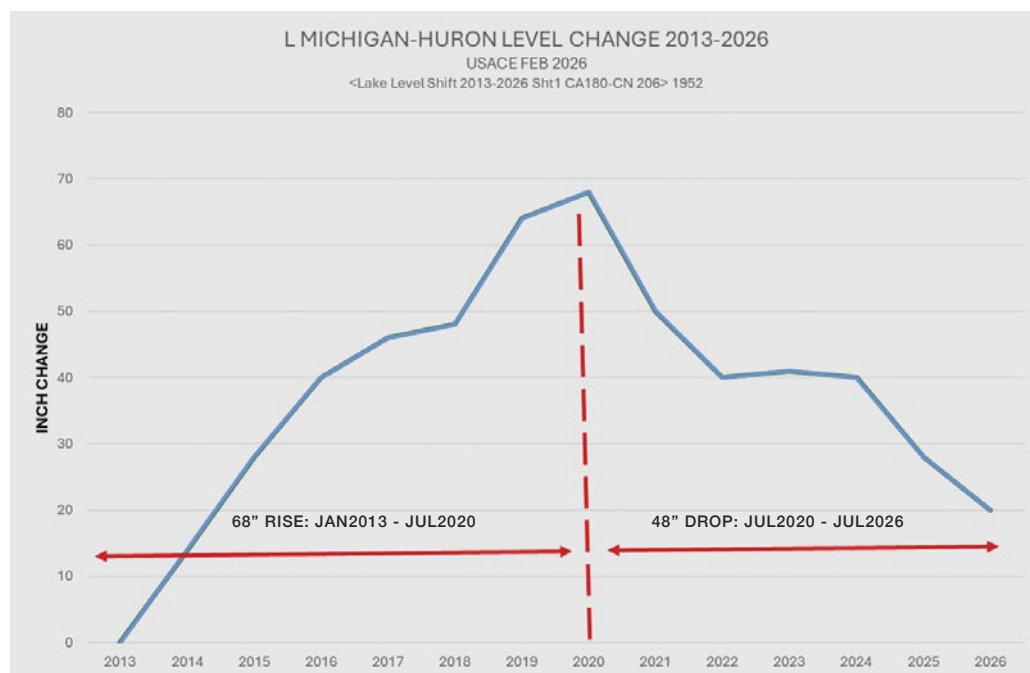
Variation of Great Lakes water levels in the four-to-five foot range have been recorded since the mid-1800s. No lake level shifts of almost six feet over a short eight-year period were recorded during that time.

The Les Cheneaux Watershed Council (LCWC) took advantage of this unprecedented event to monitor important water quality factors of plankton, phosphorus and temperature changes during the rapid Lake Michigan-Huron (M-H) rise.

Each year, data and water specimens were collected May through September and samples subsequently analyzed at the University of Michigan Biological Station, Douglas Lake. Water level increase within the Les Cheneaux Islands from an historic low in 2013 through the summer of 2020 to the historic high is shown in the figure above.

As shown in the trendline summary below, Lake M-H increased almost six feet, water temperature dropped, total phosphorus concentrations decreased almost sixfold and plankton density decreased fivefold. Although annual variation occurred, trendlines for all three variables monitored had a downward slope during the study.

Temperature decline attributed to the inflowing, cooler M-H water appeared to have decreased plankton metabolism and, therefore, overall plankton density. A dilution effect from the inflow of low-nutrient M-



H water would be expected to limit available phosphorus as a plankton energy source. However, significant phosphorus dilution was likely mitigated by higher water levels suspending organics from the shorelines, which then became available as a plankton food source.

Plankton growth deficits due to phosphorus limitation were reflected by the flatter slope of plankton density.

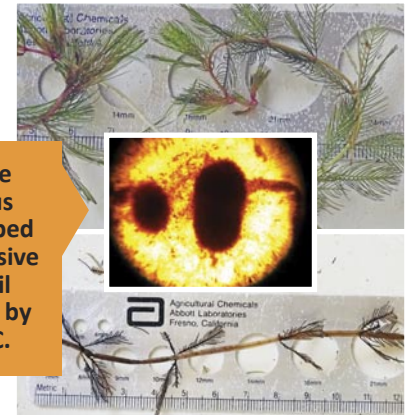
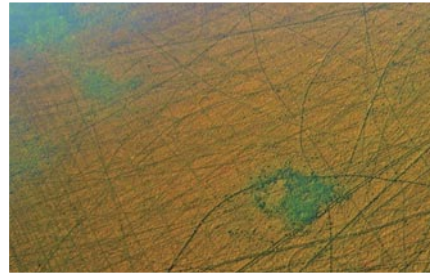
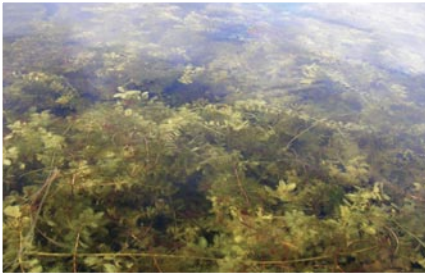
These same variables will continue to be monitored as Lake M-H waters recede.

RESURGENCE OF INVASIVE WEEDS ACCOMPANIES CONTINUED DROP IN LAKE LEVEL

Lower lake level allows light penetration that energizes submersed plant growth, including the highly aggressive, non-native Eurasian watermilfoil that choked our waterways from 2006 to 2013. Lower water levels also encourage growth of emergent shoreline plants, such as non-native cattail and phragmites which are inhibited by higher lake levels.

Below, left: Dense milfoil growth from the lake bottom to the surface.

Below, right: Milfoil mat limited boating. Striations are propeller cuts.



Native fungus developed for invasive milfoil control by LCWC.



From top left to bottom right:

A damp start to FrogFest turned into another well attended event // Gov't Island Trail Maintenance // 4th July Parade // Stocking Splake with MDEQ Fisheries.



FOUR WAYS to provide continued financial support to LCWC with 501(c)3 status:

- ◆ **A check** sent to our address
- ◆ **PayPal** through our website, lescheneauxwatershed.org
- ◆ Through the **LC Community Foundation** directed to either our LCWC endowed or unendowed account.
- ◆ **Funds transferred directly from an IRA to LCWC.** This avenue is approved under the new tax code. For details, refer your tax advisor to the article, "How to Donate Your Required Minimum Distribution to Charity" from *U.S. News & World Report*.

<https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/iras/articles/2017-12-04/how-to-donate-your-required-minimum-distribution-to-charity>

Re-new your membership with the LCWC today!

We need your support to preserve the health of our waters!

Basic Membership	☐ \$15	Leopard Frog	☐ \$100
Spring Peeper	☐ \$25	Blue Heron	☐ \$500
Green Frog	☐ \$50	Wetland	☐ \$1,000
Tree Frog	☐ \$75	Water Guardian	☐ \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Email _____

Send check to: LCWC • PO Box 578 • Cedarville, MI 49719



LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 578
CEDARVILLE, MI 49719



**LCWC Proprietary Biofungicide –
Native fungus developed for
invasive milfoil control by LCWC.**

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026

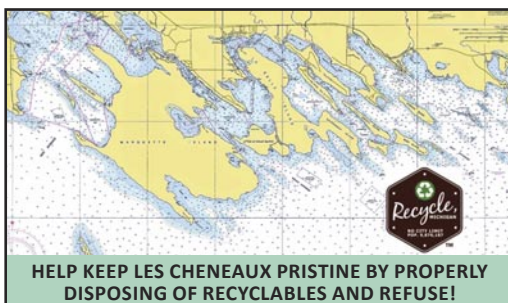


Above, left to right: Remote stream sensors installed by Cedarville High School students in collaboration with LSSU, ISD & LCWC // Cisma crew mechanically removing non-native cattails // Annual MDNR fish survey in Les Cheneaux. MDNR and EGLE have reported the lowest levels of PFOS in local fish in the state.

Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA) will once again be sailing our waters this summer for the 10th year. ISEA is scheduled to conduct their LCI training sessions from Hessel, August 1 & 2. The ***Inland Seas*** will sail twice a day while

providing a unique, educational and fun experience for children and adults. The ship's crew provides a hands-on experience in water research as well as

have participants take part in ship handling skills. The event is sponsored by our Watershed Council and is an activity of the Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA). Learn more about ISEA at www.schoolship.org – Ticket sales will begin in May.



Above: Local tree swallows do their share for insect control.