

MiCorps 2025 Volunteer Lake and Stream Monitoring Conference

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CLMP Volunteer

President, Bass Lakes Area Environmental Partnership

Big Bass and Little Bass Lakes

Lake County, Irons MI

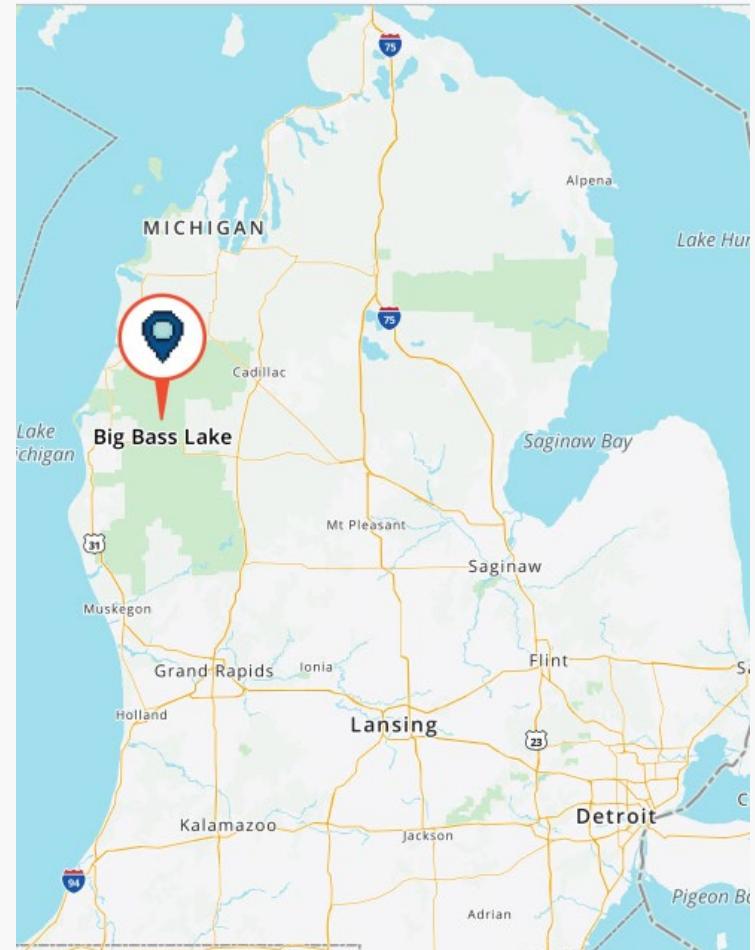
Bass
Lakes
Area
Environmental
Partnership

A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization



How It Began

- Full time lake residents 2017
- First Big Bass/Little Bass Lake Association meeting 2018
 - Discussion about something called milfoil
 - Very unhappy with herbicide company
 - Volunteers for “milfoil committee”
- What is milfoil? The journey began...



Our Story

- 2018: Learnings/discoveries from “milfoil committee”
 - “Milfoil” was EWM, an aquatic invasive species
 - Big Bass Lake milfoil treatment since 2009
 - Application of > 45 tons herbicide and ~\$400,000 cost to riparians (\$\$ collected through Special Assessment District: SAD)
- Big Bass Lake joined CLMP in 2019, Little Bass Lake in 2021, to get a handle on water quality/aquatic veg
 - Lots of samples collected and data generated
 - Especially exotic aquatic plant watch
 - Milfoil in most surrounding lakes
 - Starry stonewort, zebra mussels
 - Costly control

Our Story (cont.)

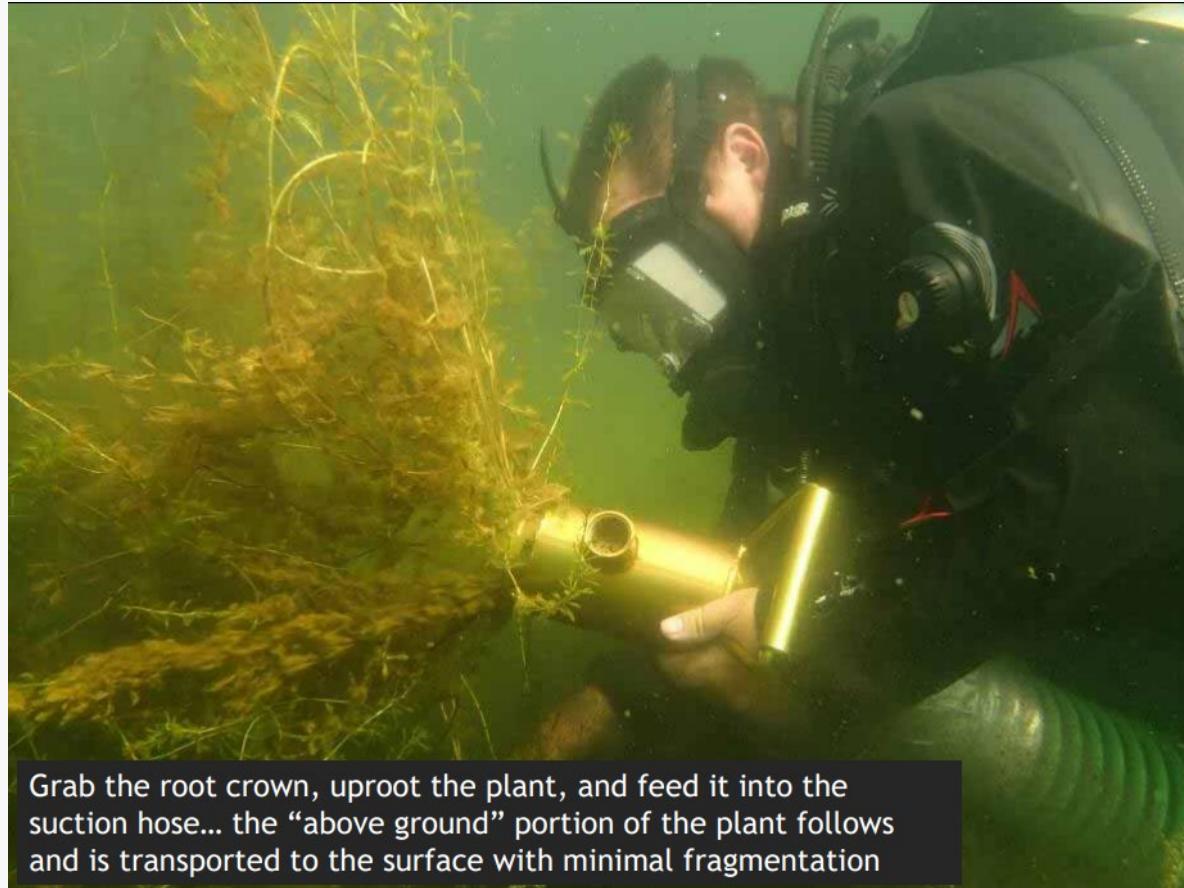
- In 2019, BBL 13 distinct milfoil samples sent to Dr Ryan Thum for genotyping
 - All samples were hybrid milfoil
 - (2025, LBL milfoil same hybrid strain as found in BBL)
 - Hybrid milfoils more resistant to commonly used herbicides
- In 2020, founded 501(c)3 non-profit: Bass Lakes Area Environmental Partnership
 - Explore non-chemical ways to control EWM
 - Benthic mats, weevils, mechanical harvesting, DASH
 - Eligible for grants, tax-deductible donations
- Diver Assisted Suction Harvest (DASH)
 - Partnership with US Forest Service/US Department of Agriculture
 - Pilot study 2020 and 2021

Diver-Assisted Suction Harvesting

- Control of submerged aquatic invasive plants - EWM
- ID and hand pull intact plants
- Immediately fed into a suction hose and transported to surface

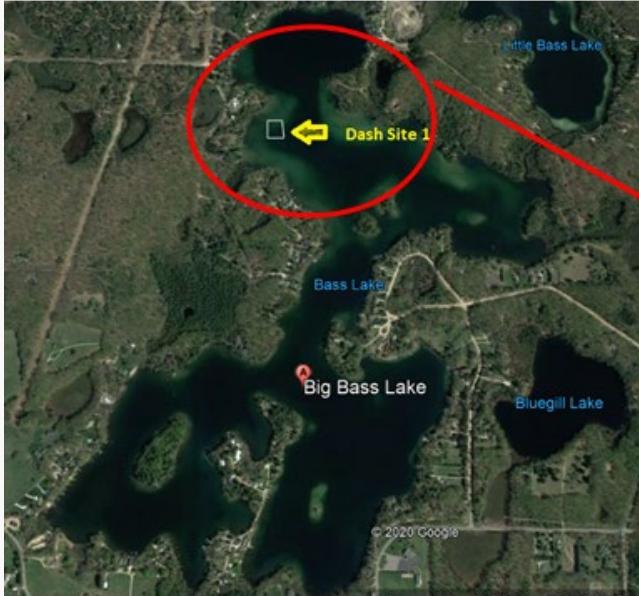


How to DASH



- DASH is weeding your lake bottom
- Divers pull the milfoil up by the roots, feed into suction hose, takes the plant material to the boat, bags plants, water returns to lake
- Most fragments are sucked up; any that float to the surface are skimmed with a net

DASH Pilot Study: 2020/2021



For those not familiar with milfoil, here are a couple of photos.



- Hired DASH company
 - 2 days DASH 2020
 - 8 days DASH 2021
- We followed the results of the pilot study 2022-2023
 - DASH is highly efficacious, but has limited durability
 - Additional DASH required for milfoil control
- One summer of DASH costs ~2X cost of DASH boat
- Let's buy a DASH boat!

We Have a DASH Boat!

September 21, 2024 was its maiden voyage & milfoil harvest



Milfoil Removal



50 lb onion bags were used to capture the milfoil for disposal
Milfoil excellent for composting!

DASH Goals

- Short-term:
 - Part of BBL AIS management plan
 - Reduce need for herbicides
 - Control milfoil in LBL
- Long-term:
 - SAD to include funding for DASH in BBL & LBL
 - Hire dive team, work all summer
 - Eliminate herbicides
 - Expand to other lakes in area

We Do Lots of Fun & Educational Stuff!

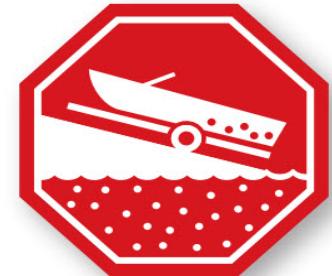
- Communication!: Develop an electronic distribution list, website and Facebook page
- Annual meetings
 - CLMP demonstrations, share CLMP data, tell riparians what the data mean
 - Food, raffles, silent auctions
 - Guest speakers:
 - Jerry Kass, Mason-Lake Conservation District, natural shorelines
 - Erick Elgin, MSU Extension, aquatic plants & hand-pulling EWM
 - Craig Kivi, Natural Shorelines Forever, wood habitat (fish sticks)
 - Emily Fredricks, North Country CISMA, AmeriCorp NH DASH experience
- Sharing info from MiCorps, EGLE, UpNorth Live, North Country CISMA, Conservation Districts, IPR, All Things Wild Rescue&Rehabilitation, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Topics: fish, types of ice, aquatic mammal footprints in snow, native and invasive plants, Clean Drain Dry, rewilding your lawn, pesticides kill pollinators and birds, most popular: turtles and swimmers itch!
- AIS Blitz
- Mobile Boat Wash
- Atta-Boy cards

AIS Blitz

- Held at BBL boat launch every summer
- Volunteers partner with state and local agencies to deliver consistent messaging about preventing the introduction & spread of AIS from movement of watercraft and equipment between water bodies
- Info and great swag!



Mobile Boat Wash



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

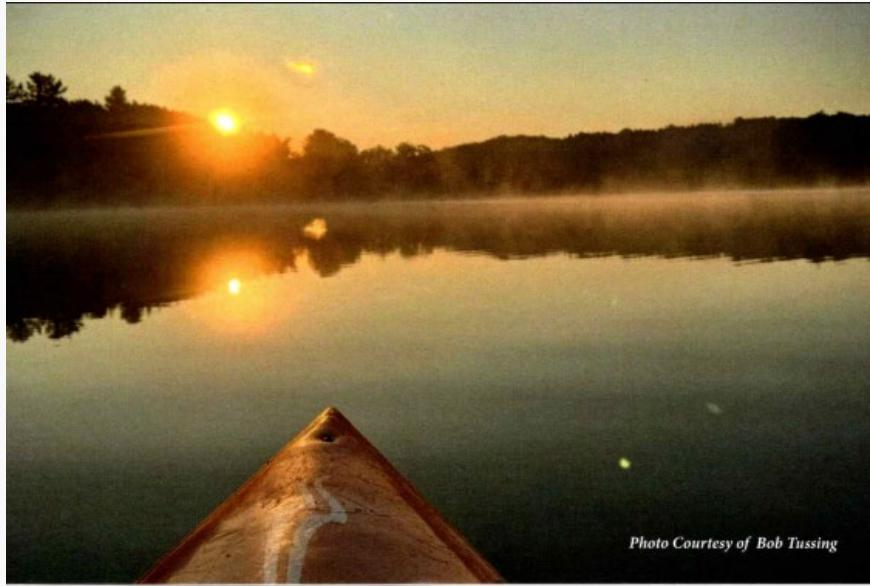
Be A Good Steward.
Clean. Drain. Dry.

StopAquaticHitchhikers.org

Stop the Transport of Invasive Species:

- CLEAN boots, gear, boat, trailer & vehicle of plants, fish, animals & mud.
- DRAIN bilge, ballast, wells & buckets before you leave the area.
- DRY equipment before launching watercraft into another body of water.

Atta-Boy Cards



Thank you for keeping our lake natural and beautiful!

- Natural shoreline (at least some)
- No seawall or rip rap (can a turtle climb it?)
- Unmowed vegetation belt at shoreline
- Minimal beach encouraged
- Vegetation in the water near shoreline
- Downed trees/logs in the water



*For more information, please check out the
Mi Natural Shoreline Partnership
<https://www.shorelinepartnership.org/>*

<https://basslakesaep.wixsite.com/501c3>

Riparian Connection

- Hardest part of all
- Apathy
 - I can drive my boat without getting stuck in milfoil
 - Herbicides have been working so far
 - Why fix what ain't broke
 - I come here to relax and get away from problems
 - Fishing not as good as it used to be, but still fish in the lakes
- Fertilized lawns down to lake front (or seawall)
- Sandy beaches and bottoms created
- Oscillating blowers to keep muck away
- But there is hope...!
 - Find something fun & interesting
 - Started “What the heck is this?”
 - People send in pictures & questions
 - Jo Latimore & Erick Elgin provide the answers

What the Heck is This?

- Fresh water sponges!
- Texture similar to sea cucumber with tiny exterior bristles
- Native to MI
- Related to marine sponges
- Look green because algae grow within them



What the Heck is This?



- Chinese mystery snails!
- Females give birth to fully developed snails that suddenly and “mysteriously” appear
- May be hidden in mud & debris; can attach to anchors, ropes, fishing, hunting gear
- No way to control them at this time
- Host to multiple parasites, but no correlation between Chinese mystery snails and swimmers itch

What the Heck is This?

- Bryozoans!
- Tiny organisms that live in colonies
- Filter feeders
- Begin to form in the spring, but usually seen in late summer/fall when they reach largest size
- Harmless to humans
- Aquatic oddity indicator of good water quality



Motivations & Inspirations

- Lots of other “What the heck is this?” examples
 - Green filamentous algae blobs, lake foam, HAB, crayfish, red milfoil, algae bloom under the ice
- Find ways to keep it light and entertaining to increase engagement
- Observations from cruises around the lakes
 - Native plantings at shoreline, unmowed areas, turtle logs, excited grandkids (future conservationists?!)

Thank you!