

Lake Tippecanoe Property Owners, Inc.

P.O. Box 224 • Leesburg, Indiana 46538

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• Fish & Wildlife • Quality of Living*



Dear LTPO Member,

Year 2020 is behind us, and I'm sure most of us are thankful as we look forward to the new year. Despite the challenges the past year brought, I hope you and your family were able to spend as much time as possible on the lakes. I would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank you for your support of our organization. It has been my distinct pleasure and honor to serve as LTPO President over the last year and a half. I am constantly amazed at the generosity of our membership in both money and time to help support our lakes.

The COVID pandemic has affected us all and the LTPO organization is not immune. If I were to take a "glass half full approach", I would say we have all realized the true value of toilet paper, we have a clear understanding of how far 6' is and have augmented our wardrobes with stylish face masks. Those are all good things, right?!

There were certainly some highlights of this past year! Due to past leadership of our organization, our members' consistent financial support and the continued unbelievable time commitment of a few of our members, we were able to accomplish some great projects for our lake community over the last couple of years. The successes we achieved have helped our lake not only for today but also for a generation to come.

First, through the direct donations of our members and forethought of past LTPO leadership, the replacement of the old dam is complete! This project will ensure our normal lake level for generations to come and will significantly reduce the risk associated with the old dam.

Second, due to direct donations by our members, we were able to continue our partnership with The Watershed Foundation on important local watershed projects directly affecting the water quality of our lakes. TWF's efforts have directly eliminated hundreds of tons of sediment and thousands of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus *annually* from entering area lakes each year. These types of projects will have long-term, positive improvement to our water quality, and we are happy to partner with TWF on projects which directly impact our lake.

Third, The LTPO and the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams partnered for the first annual Ecotour Expedition of Lake Tippecanoe! Friends and family were able to join us from the safety of their own boat to see our lake in new ways. We explored from the surface to the deepest depths and learned about the lake food chain, temperature layers, inflowing streams, surrounding wetlands, weeds and algae. Dr. Nate Bosch lead the tour and was both informative and entertaining. We look forward to this fun and informative event in 2021!

Fourth, IDNR Lake and River Enhancement continues to be a great annual partner for our Aquatic Vegetation Management program. We have been working with them for well over two decades on managing our exotic and nuisance aquatic vegetation such as Eurasian Water Milfoil, Curly Leaf Pondweed and Eel Grass. Due to this partnership, direct member donations and the time commitment of a few of our members, we have been able to control these primary exotic and nuisance vegetation over the last several years, and we have moved into mainly a maintenance mode. Despite our success in controlling the majority of exotic and nuisance aquatic vegetation, Starry

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Stonewort has proven to be a significant foe. Starry Stonewort began as a small infestation in one area of Lake Tippecanoe in 2013 of approximately 4 acres of total growth area. Since 2013, Starry Stonewort has expanded to many areas of our lakes and has grown to a total growth area of over 100 acres! This plant species is the number one threat to our lakes' ability to support an active fishery and maintain the recreational value for boaters. It is important we do not ignore the detrimental effects Starry Stonewort will have on our lakes, property values and future generations.

In the past, IDNR Lake and River Enhancement helped fund LTPO's aggressive approach to treat and control Starry Stonewort which included three aggressive treatments a year. This approach has effectively slowed its growth from the rapid acceleration in previous years, and we have even observed some areas with reduced coverage. There is hope we can control this beast!

In recent years, IDNR Lake and River Enhancement has reduced contributing funds to help cover the total cost of Starry Stonewort treatment. With significantly less funds available from IDNR and LTPO's annual budget unable to support the continued aggressive treatment in 2020, we began to see the potential of Starry Stonewort and its negative effects on our lakes. It is clear we cannot ignore this problem, and it is our full intention to recommit to the aggressive treatment plan to combat Starry Stonewort in 2021. We have members willing to give their time to manage the program, but we cannot do it without the financial support of our members.

As you may recall, LTPO increased the cost of annual membership dues in 2020. The impetus was predominantly to cover costs of the three Starry Stonewort treatments. On paper the plan worked, but to our surprise, the increase in membership cost did little to increase available funds. While the increase in membership costs had little effect on membership counts, we found that members who were already contributing over and above the minimum fees were consistent with their contributions. It makes sense, and I certainly understand.

We do not want to raise membership fees again, but it is evident that we must aggressively treat Starry Stonewort if we want to maintain the viability of our lakes. Therefore, we are asking for membership generosity once again to help fund our Starry Stonewort management plan. Moving forward, it is anticipated each treatment will cost roughly \$30,000 with three treatments totaling roughly \$90,000. It is a lot of money, but if we all contribute a little, it will fund the fight against Starry Stonewort. We are already thankful for your membership dues but are hoping you'll consider an additional donation specific to the Weed Treatment Fund to help us fight back Starry Stonewort from our lakes. We are truly grateful for any amount, but a \$100 donation is a targeted amount.

To close, how about something we all enjoy?! I'm sure you'll agree that our annual Independence Day Firework Show was spectacular in 2020! Bob Schwartz and his family have been volunteering their time to manage our lakes' firework show for as long as I can remember, and we all should be extremely grateful. Due to Bob's hard work, the show always goes off without a hitch, so let's all help by providing the needed funds for the next couple of years. Thanks to all of the generous LTPO members who supported our Fourth of July fireworks display at the suggested \$40 level last year. If every member shared this much enthusiasm, we would be all set for the 2021 show. Unfortunately, not every member can afford this level so we're hoping those of you who have been in the habit of giving more than the minimum to continue your charity and support our fireworks at higher levels. We will be grateful for any amount you can donate.

Thank you once again for your continued support of LTPO and our lakes. Cheers to moving forward in 2021 with positive thoughts and negative test results!

Best regards,
Tony Vie
LTPO President