

# A road map to water quality projects

One of roles of the Whitefish Lake Institute is to provide independent scientific results to assist decision makers in making informed decisions about our aquatic resources.

In the end, the goal is clean water, community health, and valued recreation for our enjoyment — and to spur our local economy.

On March 22, at 7 p.m. at the O'Shaughnessy Center, we will present the results of a comprehensive report we recently completed — Whitefish Area Water Resources Report: A Status of the Whitefish Lake Watershed and Surrounding Area.

This peer reviewed report presents for the first time an integrated look at our aquatic resources, having pulled together historical information and scientific results from our work and from project partners.

The report goes beyond research by providing numerous tier ranked actionable items that we can undertake as a community

to protect and improve our water quality. These actionable items provide marching orders for WLI's staff and are a road map for our community to navigate the complexities of water quality projects.

WLI would like to build upon past project successes to ensure clean water for current and future generations. Locally, water quality has been affected by cumulative impacts of many actions and it will take many solutions for us to reach our water quality potential.

As practical examples, based on WLI research, we now have an interceptor trench grate at the City Beach boat ramp to prevent gasoline constituents from flowing down the ramp and into a public swimming area.

Also at City Beach we have a boat inspection station in an effort to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species to the lake.

WLI collected contaminated samples and communicated results to the EPA while urging clean up of remaining contaminated

sediment along the shoreline of Mackinaw Bay from the 1989 train derailment. The clean-up effort was completed in 2012.

Our report on septic leachate contamination to Whitefish Lake led to the formation of the city's ad-hoc Whitefish Community Wastewater Committee and adoption of their recommendations. Currently, a Preliminary Engineering Report is being conducted for the Lion Mountain neighborhood, the first of five planned.

We need your support! We're here to provide you the science, but it takes a community to make change. Join us at the community forum to learn more about our treasured aquatic resources and how we as a community can leave a lasting clean water legacy.

— Mike Koopal is executive director at Whitefish Lake Institute, and Lori Curtis is science and education director. Together they write a monthly column for the Pilot.