

## STEWARDSHIP

I gave my wife her engagement ring at Duck Lake Channel. Our garage was previously located at one of the Boy Scout camps on the north side of Duck Lake. I caught my first pike at the east end of Duck Lake. My family has lived at Duck Lake longer than anywhere else on earth.

I mention this significance of Duck Lake to me and my family not because it's unique, but because it's so common. People love Duck Lake. Just about anyone who knows anything about Muskegon County knows Duck Lake and has a connection with it. People think about growing up on Duck Lake because so many of their best memories from so many years are from here. Generations of families share the connection. Everyone has stories about their relationship to the lake: how they came here, who they've been with, what they've seen. Our lives and the lake are intertwined.

Although not as many people are as familiar with Duck Creek, those that are care deeply. The quality of the Creek directly affects the Lake. People are attached to Duck Creek and Duck Lake and want to preserve and protect them. If there was a clear and imminent threat to the well-being of the watershed, people would rally to the defense.

How do we identify a threat to the watershed? If there is a threat, what is the best remedy? That's where we're fortunate to have expert advice available to us. In order to give us good advice the experts need facts, so information is carefully collected by volunteers associated with the Duck Creek Watershed Assembly (DCWA). In return we learn how to take care of our surroundings by using the recommended "best management practices."

At its best, stewardship involves taking care of something as if it were your own. If we're not responsible for our watershed, who is? Duck Lake and Duck Creek mean so much to us we naturally want to keep them healthy, not only for our present enjoyment, but for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

Since its beginning, volunteers have worked through the Duck Creek Watershed Assembly to look out for the best interests of our watershed in numerous ways, including:

- Spring and fall stream monitoring to judge the health of the Creek by assessing the aquatic insect population
- Advocating for a review of the impact of the reconstruction of the Nestrom bridge.
- Temperature monitoring of Duck Creek
- Stream bank assessment of Duck Creek re: erosion
- Stocking of a native weevil to address the invasion of Eurasian milfoil in Duck Lake
- Stocking of a beetle to address the invasion of purple loosestrife next to the lake
- Public education about caring for the watershed
- Involvement of school groups
- Providing test kits for septic systems
- Charting the depths of Duck Lake
- Measuring the lake (acreage)
- Monitoring water clarity in the lake
- Conducting weed surveys of the lake
- Testing water chemistry
- Working closely with the Muskegon Conservation District in the development of a watershed management plan

DCWA volunteers have also helped with record-keeping, mailings, and fund raising. There is so much we can do. If you would like to help with our efforts in the watershed, please contact any of the officers listed in the website.