



October 20, 2025

Friends and Neighbors,

It's hard to believe summer is already behind us! Time truly flies — especially at Hitchcock Lake, where we had another active and productive season.

Before the annual **lake drawdown begins on October 23**, I wanted to share a quick update on what's been happening around the lake and how you can help us keep it clean and healthy.

A Big Thank You

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined the **Hitchcock Lake Improvement Association (HLIA)** this year.

- **Lakefront membership** reached over **80%** — our highest ever.
- **Off-lake membership** grew **25%** over last year.

We're working toward our goal of **100% lakefront participation** and continued growth among off-lake neighbors. Your support funds everything from water testing to weed control to community events — all of which make lake life better for everyone.

A special thanks also to those who **hosted or attended** our 16 community activities and to our **Lake Watch volunteers** who collected water samples all summer. Your involvement keeps our lake vibrant, and our community connected.

1. Weed Control

This year, we treated the lake twice for nuisance aquatic plants — once in **April** (for Curly Leaf Pondweed) and again in **July** (for Slender Leaf Pondweed and others). For most of the summer, plant growth was well managed.

In early September, however, several South Lake residents noticed large mats of what looked like plants in shallow water. This turned out to be **Nitella (Stonewort)** — *not* a true plant, but a **type of macroalgae**. Here is what Nitella looks like:



Typically, Nitella stays below the surface, but this summer it spread unusually fast. We'll be discussing treatment options with our lake management consultants for next season — likely involving an **algaecide** rather than a traditional herbicide.

If you have Nitella in large concentrations near your property, please **let me know** so we can map out the affected areas for treatment in 2026.

2. Water Quality and Algae

Our **Lake Watch volunteers** tracked water clarity all season, and results showed the usual pattern — **clear in spring and fall**, and **cloudier in late summer** due to algae, cyanobacteria and sediment in the water.

The **South Lake** was noticeably cloudier than the **North Lake**. In April clarity in the south lake was more than 2 meters, but it dropped to less than 1 meter in August. In contrast, the north lake clarity was more than 2.25 meters during most of the year, dropping only to around 1.5 meters in August. Satellite images from April show the same trend — the south appearing brighter green due to higher concentrations of chlorophyll related to **algae and cyanobacteria** suspended in the water column.










Phosphorus, the key nutrient that fuels algae growth, was also higher than we'd like — between **18–29 parts per billion (ppb)** most of the year, peaking at **48 ppb in the South Lake** as compared to only **28 ppb in the North Lake** in August (our target is under 15 ppb).

Reducing phosphorus is our top long-term goal. In early October, our consultants collected **water and sediment samples** to help us design a plan for lowering phosphorus levels. We expect to have a proposal ready by spring to guide next year's budget and management efforts.

3. How You Can Help

Everyone can play a part in keeping Hitchcock Lake healthy:

-  **Join or renew** your HLIA membership and contribute to the **Renew the Lake Fund** — your dues directly support lake protection.
-  **Remove plants and algae** from your shoreline during the drawdown.
-  **Don't dump** leaves or grass near the shoreline.
-  **Avoid fertilizers** with phosphorus.
-  **Skip driveway car washes** — soaps and oils run into the lake.
-  **Pick up after pets** and keep trash out of the water.
-  **Volunteer** for Lake Watch or report unusual lake conditions (photos help!).

No one else will take care of our lake — it's up to all of us. Thank you for doing your part to protect this wonderful place we call home.

If you'd like to get involved or have questions, feel free to reach out: call me at **860-573-9151**, or email **markrsussman@gmail.com**



Warm regards,
Mark R. Sussman
President, Hitchcock Lake Improvement Association