



**Contact:** Mike Acton  
231-889-3708 or  
Kathy Ervin or Dee Dee Miller  
231-889-0352

*Issued as a Service to the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Executive Committee by the Alliance for Economic Success*

### **For Immediate Release**

## **VOLUNTEERS TAKE TO THE AIR, WATER AND STREETS: JULY 20-27 MARKS PORTAGE LAKE WATERSHED WEEK**

**Onkama, Michigan** – Armed with a new State-approved plan, volunteers are taking to the air, water and streets over the July 20-27 week to put their shoulders behind a community-wide stewardship effort to protect, wisely use and manage the Portage Lake watershed.

Proclaimed as ***“Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan Awareness Week”*** by a volunteer committee overseeing community education about the Plan, the week will include:

- Distribution of 1,000 *“Portage Lake Stewardship”* homeowners packets to help educate those living in and around Portage Lake about how they can protect the Lake’s water quality, including watershed friendly lawn maintenance and proper use and maintenance of septic systems.
- A shoreline survey of the Portage Lake that will help identify hot-spots of invasive aquatic weeds and other features.
- The raising of a Village of Onkama entry banner, proclaiming: ***“What We Put In the Watershed Stays in the Watershed. Think About it.”***
- Installation of seven signs on county roads, informing travelers that ***“You Are Entering the Portage Lake Watershed – Preserve and Protect.”*** The signs will be located on Milarch Road, 8 Mile and 9 Mile Roads, Lakeshore Road, Miller Road and 11 Mile Road.
- Posting of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan and information about the new Portage Lake Watershed Forever Endowment on a new website dedicated to the Portage Lake and Onkama area ([www.onkama.info/watershed/watershed.html](http://www.onkama.info/watershed/watershed.html))

The survey and education initiatives are being supported by a Portage Lake Watershed Monitoring and Inventory Committee. Chaired by community resident Herb Lenon, the committee is:

- Working with the Village of Onekama to take weekly water samples for E. coli testing at the Village Beach.
- Taking samples for E.coli testing at seven other locations on the Lake three times during July and August.
- Taking samples to determine dissolved oxygen levels at two deep Portage Lake locations, with the assistance of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians that has volunteered to perform the dissolved oxygen tests.

“The goal of this week is kick-off a series of actions to implement our new watershed plan and help educate people about what they can do to protect and wisely use the Portage Lake watershed forever,” said Dee Dee Miller, co-chair of the Outreach and Education Committee. “What we put in our watershed, stays in our watershed and we want to encourage people to use and enjoy our waters but do so in a way that will protect this treasure for future generations.”

The Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan was approved on June 3 by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, making the plan eligible for federal and state support. A Portage Lake Watershed Forever Endowment fund has been created at the Manistee County Community Foundation to enable charitable, tax-deductible donations to help implement the Plan in perpetuity. Information about the endowment can be obtained by contacting the Foundation at 231-723-7269.