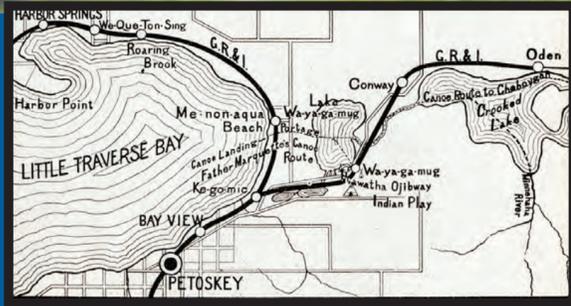




Pumpkinseed sunfish (*Lepomis gibbosus*)



A historical map of this region.

The Hiawatha Pageant

Look to the left of here about 700 feet to see the site of the historical Hiawatha Pageant on Barney's Pond which ran at this location from 1905-1917. The Hiawatha pageant was a rare opportunity for indigenous communities to portray themselves in an entertainment venue. From Ontario to Michigan, the widely successful play was carried out by numerous tribal communities, mainly from the Ojibway and Odawa tribes. The play is based on Henry Longfellow's 1855 poem 'Song of Hiawatha'. But the poem has its roots in the Great Lakes. An Ojibway from Garden River, Onatrio, Buk-wuj-ji-nini, told the stories of Nanaboozhoo, a prominent figure in Odawa and Ojibway beliefs, to Longfellow. Nanaboozhoo, whom was often looked upon as a trickster and credited for helping to shape the earth, was the original focal point. Many generations later, the Odawa of Emmet County acted out these ancient tales during a time when non-natives dominated all forms of entertainment.



The Hiawatha Pageant on Lake Wa-Ga-Mug



A drone view from above where you are now standing, looking west, northwest.

Round Lake - Head of the Inland Waterway

The lake lying before you is Round Lake, one of 17 inland lakes in Emmet County.

Round Lake is not exactly round in shape, but is more triangular or even heart-shaped. The name comes from the Native American words for "round lake": Lake Wa-Ga-Mug. About 50 other lakes throughout Michigan are also named Round Lake.

This Round Lake covers 337 acres, or about 1/2 square mile. The maximum depth is 14 feet and the average depth is 5.6 feet with a shoreline length of three miles. It contains about 560 million gallons of water. Round Lake's watershed (the area of land draining into the lake) covers six square miles. The inlet stream is an unnamed stream flowing from Mud Lake (*see map*) and the outlet is known as Round Lake Creek.

Round Lake is monitored regularly by several organizations and agencies and has been found to have good water quality. Like many small, shallow lakes in northern Michigan, this lake is classified as eutrophic, or highly productive. This is evidenced by beds of submerged aquatic plants such as pondweed, water milfoil, and chara (branched algae) with occasional summer algae "blooms".

The features mentioned above allow Round Lake to support a diverse warm water fishery. Dominant sport fish include smallmouth and largemouth bass, northern pike, yellow perch, bluegill, pumpkinseed sunfish, and brown bullhead. There are also dozens of species of non-

game fish like minnows, darters, and sculpins.

Round Lake was formerly part of larger post-glacial stages of what are now the Great Lakes. About 3,500 years ago, a sandbar formed near the head of what is now Little Traverse Bay. The water level dropped and sand dunes formed on top of the sandbar, isolating what is now Round Lake from what is now Lake Michigan and Little Traverse Bay. The hills beyond the far western shore are those now forested dunes. Lake Michigan lies only about a quarter mile beyond the crest of the dunes.

Despite its proximity to Lake Michigan, Round Lake is part of the Cheboygan River Watershed, and its waters eventually flow to Lake Huron at Cheboygan.

Native Americans and early European explorers would portage their canoes from Lake Michigan over the dunes to Round Lake, down Round Lake Creek, and then through a series of interconnecting lakes and rivers to Lake Huron, saving many miles of potentially hazardous Great Lakes coastal travel. Today, much of this water route is known as Michigan's Inland Waterway, a 45-mile-long scenic route providing excellent recreational boating, swimming, and fishing opportunities.

(Note to modern day adventurers: Round Lake Creek is only marginally navigable even for a canoe, and can get very low or even dry up in summer.)



Lake Michigan
Conservancy
Nature preserves
are shown in
light green.



Common loon (*Gavia immer*)

Debbie Klein

The Loons of Round Lake

For many decades, a marshy cove on the far side of the lake has been home to a pair of nesting Common loons (*Gavia immer*). The loon is an ancient species whose ancestral roots can be traced back more than 100 million years. Feeding primarily on fish, they are excellent swimmers and divers, able to dive to 200 feet for up to five minutes. Common loons are known for their spectacular mating dances and eerie wails that make them symbolic of our wild northern lakes and marshes. They winter on the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Coast.

Loons require undisturbed habitat and are very sensitive to human activity while nesting or rearing young. Loon numbers today are very low compared to what historical populations are believed to have been. As such, the loon has been listed as a threatened species in Michigan since 1987.

The nesting pair on Round Lake is monitored by volunteers coordinated by Michigan Loonwatch. If you're lucky, you may observe the loon family with chicks out on the water, hear their call, or see them flying overhead as they travel to forage on nearby waters. The Round Lake loons are banded, and the bands can be seen to identify individual loons when they waggle their feet. Hopefully with about one quarter of the Round Lake shore protected as LTC preserves, loons will continue to successfully nest here for years to come.



Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area
community foundation

This sign was completed with support from the Little Traverse Conservancy (www.landtrust.org) and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation (www.phsac.org).