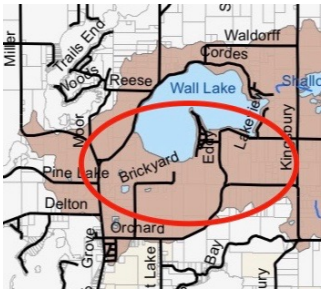
Greater Wall Lake Association

GWLA and Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Partner to Monitor and Protect Wall Lake's Wetlands and Watershed

2019
December

Wall Lake wetlands



Wall Lake's wetlands are the origin of the Cedar Creek watershed.

GWLA is delighted to announce a partnership in a multi-year wetlands and watershed protection project with the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute.

On October 14, 2019, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) announced that the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute was awarded watershed management planning grant funding.

The purpose of this project is to develop a watershed management plan that will ultimately benefit the lakes and streams in the Cedar Creek Watershed, including Wall Lake.

The watershed management plan will help partner groups restore impaired waters, and protect high-quality waters.

Several partner groups are participating in this project, representing various lakes and organizations within the Cedar Creek watershed.

The Cedar Creek Watershed is a subwatershed of the Thornapple River Watershed, which is part of the Grand River Watershed.

The Cedar Creek Watershed originates in the land surrounding Wall Lake's wetlands, and flows northeast, ending at the Thornapple River, which is suffering from excess E.coli and nutrients, erosion, and sedimentation.

Because the Cedar Creek Watershed originates in the land containing Wall Lake's wetlands, this area is of particular importance to the viability of the watershed.

GWLA and Wall Lake stakeholders will assist with water quality monitoring, participate with Steering and Educational/Information Committees, and provide stakeholder input.

This project is comprehensive and exceptionally well planned.

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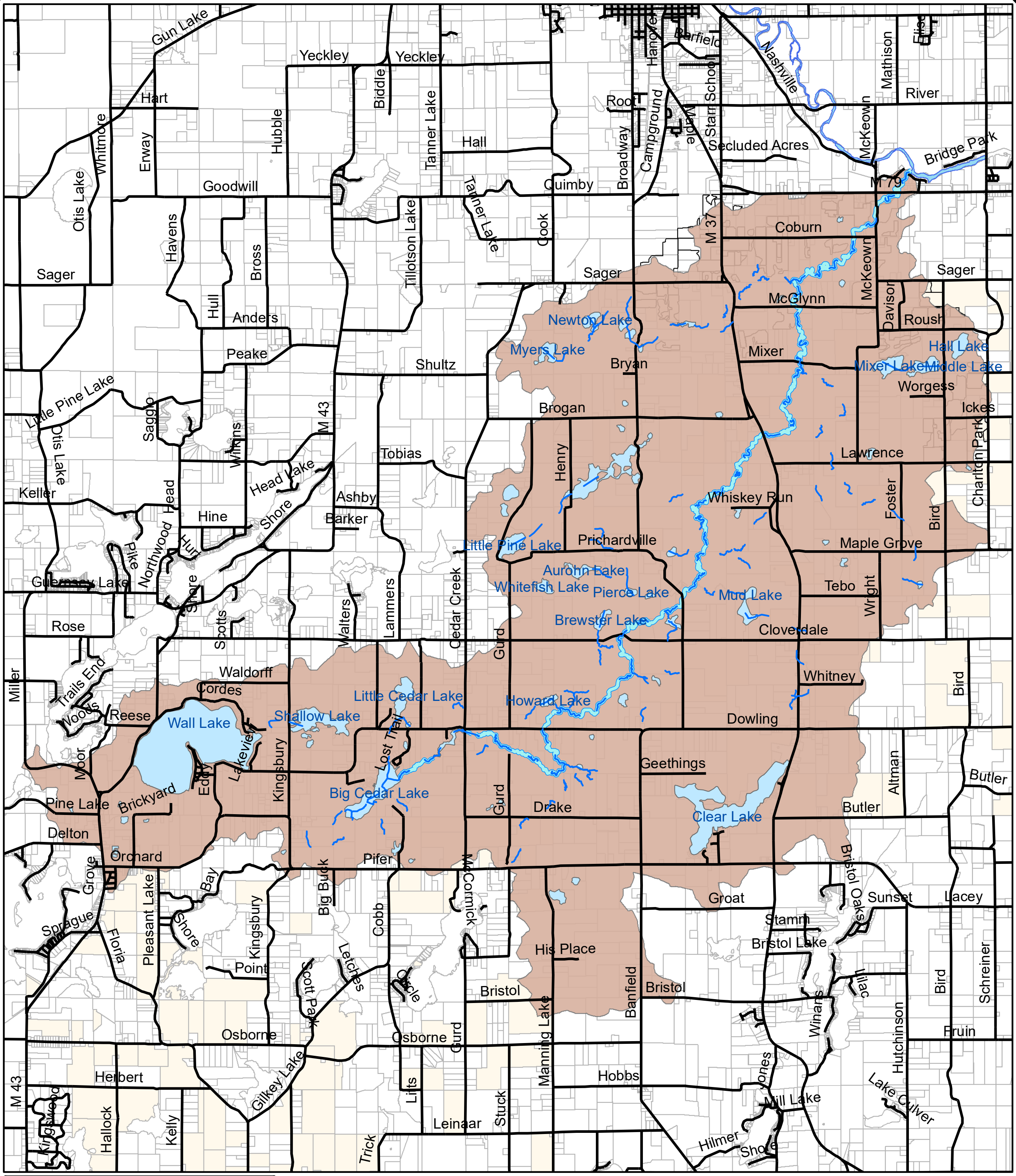

Legend

- Roadway
- Cedar Creek Watershed
- Hydrology

CEDAR CREEK WATERSHED MAP

PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE
CEDAR CREEK WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN PROJECT

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute
for environmental education

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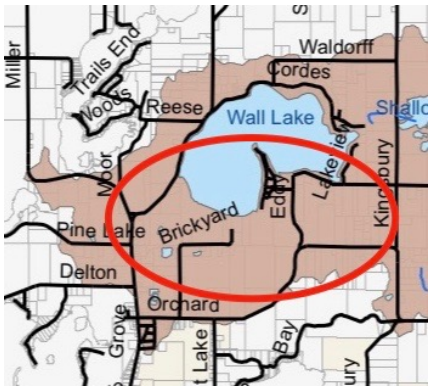
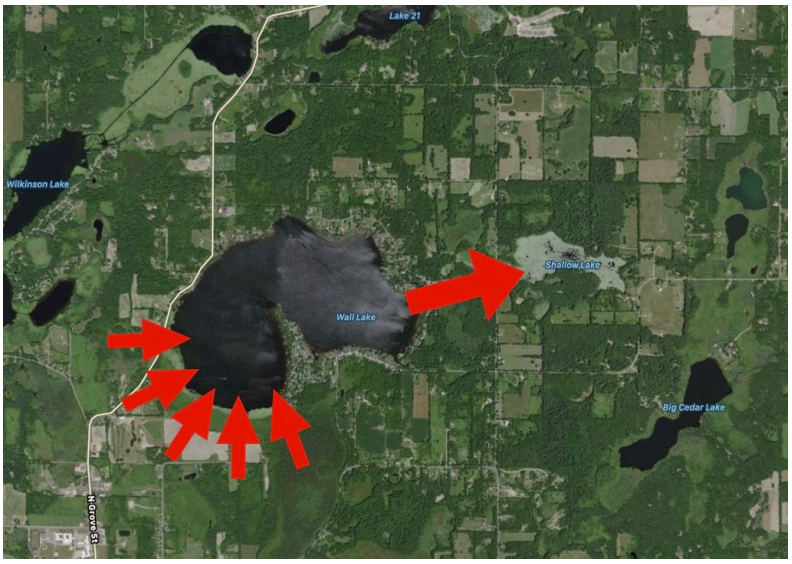
Wall Lake's Wetlands



Wall Lake gets most of its water from a 1,000-acre acid bog south of the wetlands on the south side of the lake. This bog is known as Blachman Swamp. Wall Lake is at a slightly lower elevation than the acid bog and this is why the bog water flows into Wall Lake. Water drains very slowly from acid bogs, and therefore, Wall Lake receives its non-precipitation water very slowly. This acid bog and Wall Lake's wetlands are the origins of the Cedar Creek Watershed.

Acid bogs are a common feature of wetland ecosystems. They are noted for their wet, spongy, and poorly draining peaty soil. Plant decomposition creates the acidic water in an acid bog. Acid bogs are considered important and fascinating environmental phenomena and they contain unique foliage and wildlife.

Wall Lake's wetlands provide an essential cleansing mechanism as they filter the water entering the lake. The wetlands remove acid from the bog water; regulate nutrients entering Wall Lake; and remove pollutants.



Wall Lake is relatively shallow, and because it has no other major source of water other than precipitation, its water is renewed very slowly (3-4 year retention time). Damage to the function of the wetlands would allow free flowing acid water to enter Wall Lake, and in the words of the late MSU Biologist Joe Johnson, create an "environmental disaster" that would harm plant and animal life in Wall Lake.

Wall Lake serves as a migration staging area for waterfowl. The wetlands provide diverse and abundant aquatic plant beds that diving ducks eat. Plant loss will occur if the acidity of the water entering Wall Lake increases, and animal habitat will be lost. Also, Wall Lake serves as an excellent habitat for fish. Loss of plant life will create loss of habitat for fish, and increased water acidity will decrease subsurface insect populations, a major food source for many fish.

We will publish periodic updates regarding the progress of this wetland/watershed project, and we will share information about other groups in the Cedar Creek Watershed that are partnering with the Pierce Institute on this important project.

Thank you for your support as we continue to protect Wall Lake.

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute

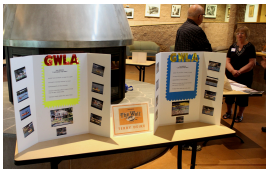
Inspiring Appreciation and Stewardship of our Environment

2018 GWLA Annual Member's Meeting

In 2018 GWLA held its Annual Member's Meeting at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute.

Terry and Helen Deike

Terry and Helen Deike, GWLA members and supporters of the Pierce Institute, created a table presentation of Terry's Kayak The Wall event.



Pierce Cedar Creek Institute is a nature center, environmental education center, and biological field station located on 742 acres with nine miles of hiking trails, located ten miles south of Hastings, Michigan.

In 1988, Bill and Jessie Pierce formed the Willard G. Pierce and Jessie M. Pierce Foundation as a way to give back to Hastings, Barry County, and West Michigan. The Pierces passed away in 1998, but just prior to their deaths, the idea of building an environmental education center was conceived while visiting a friend's home and enjoying the natural beauty of Barry County.

The Institute is home to a wide variety of natural communities, including constructed prairie, succession forests, mature oak/hickory and beech/maple forests, hardwood and conifer swamps, wetlands, fens, as well as several species listed on state or federal "endangered", "threatened", or "special concern" lists.

As a biological field station, the Pierce Institute provides opportunities for research in the environmental sciences. Their biological field station works with a consortium of colleges and universities from Michigan and Indiana: Aquinas College, Calvin University, Central Michigan University, Cornerstone University, Grand Valley State University, Hope College, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kendall College of Art and Design, Valparaiso University, and Western Michigan University.

For both consortium members and other organizations, the Institute can provide classroom space, housing, meal service, field trips, and research facilities.

As a Michigan biological field station and nature center, the Institute awards annual grants to undergraduate and graduate students to complete research projects.

Thousands of students have studied and conducted research at the Pierce Institute. Subjects range from science, art, and writing.

These grants are funded under Section 205(j) of the federal Clean Water Act.
Grants were offered via a request for proposals.

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