

## **Summary; Midland County Department of Public Health Sanford Lake Shoreline Environmental Survey 2016 - 2017**

Assuring the quality and safety of surface waters in Midland County is an important priority of the Midland County Health Department and is embraced by our community. In an effort to assess the water quality and safety of Sanford Lake, the Midland County Health Department conducted a sanitary survey of Sanford Lake beginning October 2016. The survey included shoreline walk-downs by health department staff looking for illicit septic discharges or potential discharges. A drawdown of Sanford Lake for dam repairs allowed this opportunity.

Parameters were set using GIS which allowed 13.5 miles of shoreline to be evaluated. This is about 40% of the total 33.5 miles of shoreline. Staff conducting the walk-downs identified 77 sites as a “possible illicit discharge” or “suspected” based on visual and olfactory observations. While many of those properties contained drain lines with run off toward the lake, none tested displayed an immediate illicit discharge of sewage.

However, one possible issue of concern identified was responsible fertilizer use near the lake. In many areas of algal and vegetation growth near the shoreline, lush green lawns were also observed. Runoff into the lake from lawn fertilizer that promotes green grass also provides nutrients for algae and aquatic plant growth. This contributes to algae blooms.

The last sanitary survey of Sanford Lake was done over 30 years ago. During that survey all homes were dye tested. At that time, many structures found with illicit discharges were identified and corrected. While the most recent study has some limitations (not all properties were surveyed), the study provides some assurance that there is no longer a significant issue with immediate illicit septic discharges into Sanford Lake.



**Seawall drain tiles and pooled algae growth; this was a typical observation near lush green lawns.**