The Bass Lakes Area Environmental Partnership 501c3 organization was created in 2021 by riparians from Big Bass and Little Bass Lakes in Irons, Michigan committed to education and the control and prevention of aquatic invasive species through innovation and cutting-edge science. Their mission is to promote public awareness, forge partnerships among citizens, scientists, and professionals, and foster the protection of the lakes' ecosystems for today and for generations to come. Big Bass and Little Bass Lakes are all-sports lakes and have a public access, allowing visitors and local residents to enjoy our beautiful waters year round.

The overall health of any lake is strongly connected to the type and density of aquatic vegetation present in the lake. Aquatic invasive species (AIS), such as Eurasian Water Milfoil and Starry Stonewort, are a major threat to the ecological balance in lakes since they out-compete native aquatic vegetation for sunlight and nutrients. This leads to significant AIS overgrowth and the resultant decrease in native plants and habitat. This dense AIS overgrowth negatively impacts recreational boating and swimming, as well as the fish populations due to reduction of spawning and hiding habitat.

Start-up costs have limited the amount of work the organization could do in 2021-22, but they have still held several educational events (Summer of Septic educational campaign, AIS Blitz, MSU Mobile Boat Wash) and completed a pilot study of the Diver Assisted Suction Harvest (DASH) technique. Both Big Bass and Little Bass Lakes are infected with AIS. Since 2009, over $330,000 has been paid by lake property owners to control AIS through the use of herbicides. There is a Special Assessment District in place, administered by Elk Township, but these funds are for payment of herbicide application. Unfortunately, AIS continues to be a problem, interfering with fishing and recreation. Other exploratory methods, such as DASH and benthic mats, will be funded through the Bass Lakes Area Environmental Partnership 501c3 organization. Hopefully, one of these non-chemical alternatives will become part of their lake management plan to control AIS and decrease the amount of herbicides put in the waters each year.

The organization is starting out small, but hopes to expand in the future to include other waters within our watershed.