



CRYSTAL LAKE WATERSHED WITH BATHYMETRY OF CRYSTAL LAKE BENZIE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Produced by Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels,
"President *pro tem*, Benzie County River Improvement Company, Est. 1873".
Map compiled by Trevor Hobbs



ABSTRACT

In 1873, an attempt was made to construct a system of canals from Crystal Lake to Lake Michigan in Northwest Lower Michigan. This endeavor led fortuitously to the dramatic lowering of the level of Crystal Lake, a very large inland lake renowned for its clarity, and the creation of a wide expanse of new beach that insured its future development as a prime recreational area. The historic lowering of Crystal Lake is unique when compared to other inland lakes in Michigan. Its unintended consequences evolved serendipitously from a perceived “failure” of an “ill-advised project” by an apparent scapegoat, to an unqualified “success” by a visionary celebrated as a local hero. Rediscovery of an historic map of the ambitious project, and creation of a modern high-resolution topographic/bathymetric map, allowed quantitative comparisons of size and shape parameters, and reconstruction of the true magnitude of this epochal event.

Produced by Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels. Map compiled by Trevor Hobbs.

Location: 44.659167 N Lat. x -86.156389 W Long

Contact: Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, “President *pro tem* Benzie County River Improvement Company, Est. 1873”